71-23,015

PHILIPP, Mangol Bayat, 1937-
MIRZA AQA KHAN KIRMANI: NINETEENTH CENTURY PERSIAN REVOLUTIONARY THINKER.

University of California, Los Angeles, Ph.D., 1971
History, general

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

© Copyright by

Mangol Bayat Philipp

1971

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN MICROFILMED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani:

Nineteenth Century Persian Revolutionary Thinker

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

Mangol Bayat Philipp

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Nikki R. Keddie, Chairman

Professor Gustave E. von Grunebaum

Professor Amin Banani

Professor Eugene Weber

Professor Speros Vryonis

1971

The dissertation of Mangol Bayat Philipp is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm.

Committee Chairman

University of California, Los Angeles

1971

to Thomas

Table of Contents

		Page
Acknowledgment		v
Vita		vi
Abstract		vii
Preface		1
Chapter 1	The Reign of Nasir ud-Din Shah	7
Chapter 2	Afghani, Malkam, Akhundzada.	37
Chapter 3	Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani: Biography.	91
Chapter 4	Kirmani's Socio-Anthropological Ideas	141
Chapter 5	Hasht Bihisht: Babi Thought	199
Chapter 6	Nationalism and Revolution	285
Conclusion		325
Bibliography		330

Acknowledgment

I wish to thank Mrs. Nikki R. Keddie for her guidance and helpful advice throughout the preparation of this thesis. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. G. E. von Grunebaum, Director of the Near Eastern Center, whose help and encouragement enabled me to pursue my graduate studies. My warmest thanks to Miss Peggi Conrad for her kind assistance in typing this manuscript.

Vita

June 28, 1937--Born, Cairo, Egypt

1961--B. A., American University in Cairo

1961-1963--B. A. Honours, University of London

1963-1964--Instructor in English, Lyçée Francais, Cairo

1964-1968--Research Assistant, Near Eastern Center, University of California, Los Angeles

1968-1969--Instructor, History Department, Occidental College, Los Angeles

1970-1971--Instructor, History Department, University of California, Los Angeles

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani:

Nineteenth Century Persian Revolutionary Thinker

by

Mangol Bayat Philipp

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 1971

Professor Nikki R. Keddie, Chairman

The mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Iran saw the rise and spread of two important revolutionary movements, one religious, Babism, and the other political, constitutionalism. Although the nature of the two differed, both shared in common two main characteristics: they were movements for reform, and they were also vigorous protests against the oppression by the ruling classes, secular as well as clerical. They thus succeeded in rallying to their support a large portion of the educated, enlightened, discontented segment of the population. Many of the constitutional leaders were Babis, either openly or secretly so. Some converted for a while, but soon were disenchanted and preferred a more secular ideology.

Up to that period, political nationalism scarcely existed in Iran. However, cultural nationalism, if one may use this term, has always been strong in Islamic Iran. Vis a vis their fellow Muslims, mainly the Turks and the Arabs, the Persians have generally been convinced of the superiority of their own culture and the glory of their past. Their famous poets offered them "a perfect literarization of their life as a nation".

Cultural identity thus existed as a sentiment. By the turn of the century, it came to be intellectualized and expressed politically by the Constitutionalists. Among a small minority of these revolutionaries, it took a chauvinistic anti-Arab, anti-Islamic coloring. Their struggle was in the name of Iran and not Islam, which came to be blamed for the downfall of the Persians as a nation. Iran was now the subject-matter of the so-called "Literature of Revolt", mostly written by angry, bitter men in exile.

Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani was one of the most striking representatives of this new type of Persian intellectual at the turn of the century. He played no major role in the important political events of his time, and the prolific amount of work he wrote offers no significant, original thought; nevertheless, one should by no means underestimate him nor dismiss his works as worthless. For, together with his contemporaries,

he formed a transitional generation that was both the critic of Iran's crisis and its symptom and victim. He belonged to a historic moment of thought when old values were for the first time questioned, rejected and new ones were sought. The bitter conflict he went through was unavoidable, as is the case at those period of history when a change of social organization is necessary, and the new values come into opposition to the time-honored standards which have proved to be inadequate and uninspiring for further advance into the future. The conflict that we are talking about here is the more bitter and the more conscious of itself as the new values in fact were borrowed from an alien culture. Kirmani's ideas were often confused and inconsistent, revealing a state of mind that was still too deep-rootedly traditional to grasp the significance of modern Western thought. This confusion and inconsistency, however, could in themselves be of great interest to the historian from a social and psychological point of view.

Hence, this work is a study of an individual with his own peculiar historical background and his personal circumstances, rather than a study of original thought that contributed to the literary or social history of modern Iran. For the questions he raised, although new and highly controversial in Iran, were not his own, nor were his answers. He merely copied. The importance of this study lies in (1) the why and how he copied; (2) his role as a questioner, a challenger. I should not

have chosen to write about that man at all had I not believed that he could help us understand the intellectual and social confusion of the nineteenth century Persian intellectual, the half-Westernized, the imitator rather than creator.

PREFACE

Throughout the history of Iran, a country where religion has been a predominant element in the life of its inhabitants, spiritual restlessness and social malaise expressed themselves in various revolts which were religious in character. From pre-Islamic Mazdakism to nineteenth century Babism, a series of radical sects considered as heretical, and consequently ruthlessly suppressed by the ruling authorities, came into being. In many cases, the new sect was essentially the product of one individual whose new ideas and charismatic leadership attracted a large number of followers. It is only in the nineteenth century that the discontent took a clearly political form, and the pursuit of the ideal assumed a secular character. In the name of Nationalism, a small but influential anti-clerical, anti-authoritarian modern revolutionary movement came into being. Consciously or unconsciously, in a concealed manner or openly, this movement was also essentially anti-religious. In many important respects, however, it shared fundamental features with the religious sects, mainly: (1) the millenarian tradition, that is, the belief that the evil world, so full of temptation and corruption, would come to an end one day and would be replaced by a purer and better world; (2) the disposition to distinguish sharply between good and evil; (3) the insistence that justice be done at no matter what cost; (4) the obstinate refusal to compromise;

(5) the secretive method of action; and finally (6) the charismatic appeal of the leaders.

The mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Iran saw the rise and spread of two important revolutionary movements, one religious, Babism, and the other political, Constitutionalism, or Mashrūtiyyat. Although the nature of the two differed, both shared in common two main characteristics: they were movements for reform, and they were also vigorous protests against the oppression by the ruling classes, secular as well as clerical. They thus succeeded in rallying to their support a large portion of the educated, enlightened, discontented segment of the population. Many of the Constitutional leaders were Babis, either openly or secretly so. Some converted for a while, but soon were disenchanted and preferred a more secular ideology.

Up to that period, political nationalism scarcely existed in Iran. As Professor Lambton puts it,

> The loyalty of the people continued to be given mainly to the group, the quarter, the town, the craft, the religious order, or the tribe, and to be expressed mainly in Islamic terms. Nationalism based on the territorial state was almost unknown, and patriotism scarcely existed except as a religious sentiment.[1]

However, cultural nationalism, if one may use this term, has always

been strong in Islamic Iran. Vis a vis their fellow Muslims, mainly the Turks and the Arabs, the Persians have generally been convinced of the superiority of their own culture and the glory of their past. Their famous poets offered them "a perfect literarization of their life as a nation!"[2] The Comte de Gobineau, a French diplomat who had spent a few years in Iran in the 1850s, describes this very well:

> Les Persans...sont une nation très ancienne, et, comme ils le disent eux-mêmes, la plus ancienne peut-être du monde qui ait eu un gouvernement régulier et ait fonctionné sur la terre comme un grand peuple. Cette vérité est presente a l'esprit de toute la famille iranienne. Ce ne sont pas seulement les classes lettrees qui la connaissent et qui l'expriment; les gens du plus bas étage s'en repaissent, y reviennent volontiers, et en font le sujet de leur conversation ordinaire. C'est là la base du ferme sentiment de superiorite qui constitue une de leurs idées communes, et une portion importante de leur patrimoine morale.[3]

Cultural identity thus existed as a sentiment. By the turn of the century, it came to be intellectualized and expressed politically by the Constitutionalists. Among a small minority of these revolutionaries, it took a chauvinistic anti-Arab, anti-Islamic colouring. Their struggle was in the name of Iran and not Islam, which came to be blamed for the downfall of the Persians as a nation. Iran was now the subject matter of the so-called "Literature of Revolt", mostly written by angry, bitter men in exile.

Mīrzā Aqā Khān Kirmānī was one of the most striking representatives of this new type of Persian intellectual at the turn of the century. He played no major role in the important political events of his time, and the prolific amount of work he wrote offers no significant, original thought; nevertheless, one should by no means underestimate him nor dismiss his works as worthless. For, together with his contemporaries, he formed a transitional generation that was both the critic of Iran's crisis and its symptom and victim. He belonged to a historic moment of thought when old values were for the first time questioned, rejected, and new ones were sought. The bitter conflict he went through was unavoidable, as is the case at those periods of history when a change of social organization is necessary, and the new values come into opposition to the time-honoured standards which have proved to be inadequate and uninspiring for further advance into the future. The conflict that we are talking about here is the more bitter and the more conscious of itself as the new values in fact were borrowed from an alien culture. Kirmānī's ideas were often confused and inconsistent, revealing a state of mind that was still too deep-rootedly traditional to grasp the significance of modern Western thought. This confusion and inconsistency, however, could in themselves be of great interest to the historian from a social and psychological point of view.

Hence, this work is a study of an individual, with his own peculiar historical background, and his personal circumstances, rather than a study of original thought that contributed to the literary or social history of modern Iran. For the questions he raised, although new and highly controversial in Iran, were not his own, nor were his answers. He merely copied. The importance of this study lies in (1) the why and how he copied; (2) his role as a questioner, a challenger. I should not have chosen to write about that man at all had I not believed that he could help us understand the intellectual and social confusion of the nineteenth century Persian intellectual, the half-Westernized, the imitator rather than creator.

Footnotes

1. A. K. S. Lambton, "Secret Societies and the Persian Revolution of 1905-1906", St. Antony's Papers, 4, 1958, p. 43.

2. G. E. von Grunebaum, Medieval Islam, 2nd edition, Chicago, 1962, p. 290.

3. Comte de Gobineau, Trois Ans en Asie, Paris, 1859, p. 5.

1

REIGN OF NĀSIR UD-DĪN SHAH

The history of the Qajar dynasty, founded by Āqā Muhammad Khān in 1794 and which lasted one hundred and thirty years, covers fateful years in the life of the Persian nation. It was during that period that Iran was brought into the international scene, was forced to confront the West, and, in comparison to it, to realize its general state of backwardness and decay. The loss of Persian territory to Russia after disastrous wars which ended with the treaties of Gulistan in 1813 and of Turkmanchai in 1828, not only clearly revealed the country's inability to assert itself against its neighbor, but also marked the beginning of Russian encroachment on its foreign and internal affairs. Britain, in order to safeguard its own colonial possessions in the East, mainly India, in turn had to interfere to check Russia's power in Iran. For more than a century and a half then (for Anglo-Russian rivalry continued in post-Qajar times), the power struggle between these two heavily influenced Persia's major political events, often deciding the general course it followed.

After the humiliating defeats by the Russians, there was felt for the first time among the Persian government circle the need for

drastic military reforms. The men behind this project were Crown Prince ʿAbbās Mīrzā, heir to Fathʿ Alī Shah and Governor of Azerbaijan, and his able Minister, Abul Qāsim Qā'im Maqām. Attempts were also made to reorganize the political administration. On Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah's accession to the throne in 1848, a protégé of the Qā'im Maqām, Mīrzā Taqī Khān known as Amīr Kabīr, kept up the spirit of reform. Military instructors mainly from Prussia and Austria were imported to modernize the army.[1] Serious consideration was given to the establishment of a Persian navy, with the help of British experts, in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea.[2] In 1851, a new European-style school was opened, offering courses in military sciences, foreign languages, medicine, engineering, and natural sciences.

The sincere efforts of a couple of ministers to strengthen the armed forces proved, however, to be fruitless. For the army remained disorganized, and the problems of regular payment, provisioning, and equipment were never satisfactorily solved. A Western traveller to Persia in the late 1880s described the soldiers she encountered thus:

> The soldiers looked nothing than dirty, slouching ragamuffins slipshod, in tattered and cast-off clothes of all sorts, on the verge of actual mendicacy, bits of rusty uniform appearing here and there among their cotton rags.[3]

Dedicated individual ministers could not win the struggle against

centuries-old abuses of autocracy. The state of utter neglect within the army reflected the inefficiency and corruption to the last degree which characterized government officialdom. Positions were generally obtained through bribery to the Shah and his ministers,[4] for the Administration was regarded as the road to wealth, as a convenient cloak for plunder. Each official squeezed the man below him, and the highest was squeezed by the Crown. Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah's love for camp life, hunting and expeditions kept him constantly away from the seat of government.[5] He therefore very often gave free hand to his ministers, who were involved in petty quarrels and intrigues. The chaotic state of finances, the immense greed of the rulers and of their rapacious ministers, opened the door to a great number of equally unscrupulous European speculators in search of quick fortunes. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it became a common practice for the Persian government to grant concessions for the exploitation of the country's natural resources, for the establishment of a bank, for the construction of railways, etc., in return for minimal sums. The grant of such concessions and the later habit of asking and receiving foreign loans at exorbitant interest rates, reinforced Iran's growing inferior position, and encouraged even more Western intervention.

Such disastrous economic policies, the burden of heavy taxation,

the neglect of public works, together with the unpopularity of the Qajar government among its subjects, increased popular discontent and unrest, which resulted in the formation of strong movements of protest among all major segments of population. Before discussing these movements further, we should first like to turn our attention to the government attempts at reforms during this crucial period.

The Spirit of Reform

The painful realization of Iran's backwardness was first felt by men from the upper class. They were chiefly government officials who, during the course of their political careers, travelled abroad and thus had the opportunity to witness the technological achievement of the West as it was represented by its railways, its harbors, its factories, its military schools. Indeed to the administrators, educators and politicians of the Qajar Court, to those who had discovered such wonders of Europe, Science meant Technology, industry, Sanʿat. The following speech, though supposedly given by a well known religious leader of the time, Jamāl ud-Dīn Isfahānī, to a crowd, and therefore adopting a rather simplistic tone suitable to the audience, echoes the general feeling of bedazzled admiration and of awe that overwhelmed the Persian travellers.

> Verily, I know not yet whether the peoples of Europe have attained any greater heights of civilization than this. We imagined that in telegraphy Science had reached its highest level. Here in

> Tehran a man moves his hand and lo, the sound thereof re-echoes in Paris. Yet learned ere long that there was a wonder greater than this even, the telephone. Thou speakest, and thy voice, thy own voice, is heard at Kasvin. Nor was the end yet, for we behold a greater marvel, the wireless telegraphy. Thou speakest, and thy words go forth and are recorded in London, without the intervention of either wire or pole. Yet it is not a bird that serves thee as a messenger, neither is it the wind that carries thy saying. . . It is not magic, it is not delusion, it is not miracle. . . O men, o men, whence cometh all this? Know ye indeed? Then I will tell you. This is the fruit of Science. . . of Science. . . of Science. . . of Science. . . and Science existeth not in Persia.[6]

There came about a widespread belief in government circles that if Iran acquires these commodities, and its trade and industry are encouraged, "it would soon become like the European countries", and in a short while it would regain its former position as one of the most important and most advanced nations in the world.[7]

In the early years of the century the government had begun to assume the task of sending young men to Europe to study. In 1811, Crown Prince ʿAbbās Mīrzā first sent two men from Tabriz to study medicine in London. In 1815, he sent five other students to the English capital to study engineering, chemistry, artillery, lock-smithing and English.[8] These subjects were carefully selected by the royal sponsor and the British mentors in charge of the students while in England. Though Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah discouraged the practice, young Persian individuals followed it up. For it was then felt that a

degree from some Western educational institution, or sometimes just a prolonged trip to Europe, came more and more to replace a good pen and a thorough knowledge of Persian belles-lettres as a key to success and social prominence. In a letter to his son, Mihdī Qūlī, whom he sent in 1876, at the age of fourteen, to school in Berlin, Rizā Qūlī Hidāyat Mukhbir ud-Daula, a prominent official at the Shah's Court, wrote:

> Spend your life in Berlin acquiring knowledge so that on your return people would be in need of you, and not you of them. What is now of great interest in our country is sciences like engineering, trigonometry, physics, chemistry, mining and the like. There are too many military instructors here and they have no great importance. It is whatever contributes to progress that is most worthy of attention.[9]

Nasir ud-Din Shah, who admired and respected Europe for its progress,[10] shared the optimism of his officials and, at least during the first half of his reign, appointed to high government positions men who championed such thought. His most important reformer, Mīrzā Husayn Khān Mushīr ud-Daula Sipahsālār, who held office from 1871 to 1873, had seen in action westernizing Ottoman ministers such as Midhat Pasha, during his twelve-year stay in Istanbul as Persian Ambassador to the Sultan's Court. He had come to appreciate the Turkish Ministers' efforts in modernizing the administrative and educational institutions, and in bringing about essential changes. He considered reforms to be a government minister's major task and sole prerogative. He thought "each age needs a kind of rule, and a

neglect of it would lead to regret. The deputies and ministers of any government are comparable to physicians who must treat the patient according to the exigencies of his actual condition."[11] What he sought to establish in Iran, however, was nothing but symbolic equipment of a modern power: railways, a modern press, a Council of Ministers, a modernized army. Though the genuineness of his desire to bring about necessary reforms in his country is beyond doubt, it was greatly undermined by his even greater concern to demonstrate to Europe that Iran was progressing rapidly. Indeed, he never failed to emphasize the fact that foreign nations measure the degree of a country's progress according to (1) its press; (2) its trade and industry; (3) its armed forces; (4) its diplomatic representations.[12]

Not only was Mīrzā Husayn Khān too anxious to establish a good facade to impress the West, but he was also too eager for quick results. Some of his contemporaries had clearly understood this mistake. Thus, Farhād Mīrzā Mu'tamid ud-Daula, a Qajar Prince and close friend, had specifically remarked:

> Your Excellency's wish to abolish Iran's five thousand-year-old rules in six months seems unusual and beyond one's power. . . One cannot make of Iran a Farangistan so soon.[13]

The shortcomings of the reforms promoted by Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah and his ministers provided a convenient excuse for those who were opposed to these projects from the start. The sharpest negative

reaction came from the more conservative element among the ulama who saw in the railways, for instance, a symbol of "noisy intrusion of the mechanized West, bringing about an undesired intimacy with the outside world."[14] The religious leaders' resistance to Western innovations was essentially politically motivated. For, "unconditional submission to the primacy of European models would have made their religious learning irrelevant to the affairs of society and destroyed their whole raison d'être."[15] One of the Sipahsālār's fiercest enemies among this class wrote to the Shah:

> With the onslaught of the Farangis on Iran by railway, what respected influential ʿālim will remain in Iran? And if he remains will he have life and breath enough to cry even once: Alas for the faith. Alas for the nation.[16]

The Reuter concession of 1872, which was promoted and signed by Mīrzā Husayn Khān, granting a British financial speculator, Baron Julius de Reuter, the right to construct railways, to work mines and other resources, and to found a national bank, caused the formation of a successful clerical opposition movement calling for the Minister's downfall.

Attacks were also directed towards the new type of Western-educated young government officials who demanded and worked for reforms. The chief critical spokesmen were themselves important statesmen. A close associate of the Sipahsālār, Majd ūl-Mulk, who

in 1861 was Minister of Public Works and in 1871 member of the High Council of Ministers, a reformer himself, was one of the sharpest opponents of his young colleagues. Referring to them as ostriches, he claimed that they learned nothing from the country they visited, except for the destructive art of criticism. They encouraged irreligion and lacked zeal and generosity, the glitter of their foreign education concealing their shameful deeds and their ignorance.[17]

It was people like Mīrzā Malkam Khān, who was one of the strongest Westernizers during Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah's reign and the Sipahsālār's closest associate, who were the obvious target of such criticism. Malkam, having spent many years in London and Paris, had had the opportunity to study Western ideas and institutions which he then tried to promote in Iran.[18] Many of his colleagues held him personally responsible for the Shah's hostility towards the newly established school, Dār al Funūn, where he also taught. They accused him of corrupting the students by introducing them to concepts such as Revolution and Republic and diverting their attention from more serious, more profitable studies. His opponents' basic argument against him and his fellow Westernizers was that they went too far too fast in their teaching, and that they were consequently too destructive.

> Supposing that some of the new ideas could be the cure for some old troubles, an efficient doctor should know how to apply the medicine on time and in the right quantity, in order to avoid strong reactions to it. Unfortunately, they [Malkam and his like] take ruins to be the basis for development. Once an axe in hand, they destroy so much that the road to construction is obstructed.[19]

Malkam's fiercest critics were themselves calling for modernizing reforms. Majd ul Mulk, for instance, in his political pamphlet entitled Risāla-yi Majdīya, exposed the ills that were plaguing Iran. With the sharpness and the zeal of a reformer, in a language that at times possesses the fiery eloquence and journalistic simplicity of a modern revolutionary, and at others the flowery elegance and metaphoric pomposity of the formal government official, he denounced the State's Ministers' corruption and mismanagement, holding them responsible for the country's general decay. He pointed to the greedy and dishonest tax collectors; to the semi-autonomous power-thirsty governors of the remote provinces who relied on and supported the trouble-making tribes; to the stubbornly conservative army generals who objected to military reforms; to the self-indulgent aristocrats who surrounded the Shah; and to the independent-minded, self-centered Sufi leaders who had a corrupting influence upon the minds of young Persians. He deplored the defectiveness of existing government laws.

> Iran's government follows neither the Islamic Law nor other nations' rule. We must say, it is a government made up of Turkish, Persian, Tatar, Mongol, Afghan and Byzantine customs, a world by itself, mixed up and confused, full of chaos. Every few centuries each of the above mentioned people conquered Iran, and left its despicable practices behind. In the present age, all these customs are practiced.[20]

And he urged the rules to remedy these incoherent conditions before it was too late.

Yet Majd ul Mulk was no revolutionary. At no point did he hold the Shah personally responsible for this general state of decay and lawlessness. In fact he praised Nasir ud-Din Shah as a just, humanitarian reformer who was the victim of his ministers' selfishness and corruption. Nor did he ever question the validity of the country's existing social structure. Though he deplored the fact that the ruling class, riyāsat, had no respect for the millat, people, and though he was deeply concerned with the miserable lot of the peasants and soldiers, he firmly believed in class distinction. His consideration for the great neglect of the mass by the government was motivated by his conviction that the millat formed one of the basic foundations of state power, for they were the vital means through which a state establishes its economic and military strength.[21]

Mīrzā Husayn Khān Sipahsālār himself had similar views of the

millat as constituting a basis for state power. He seemed to have valued liberal ideas such as: individuals' rights and freedom; equality of all men before the Law; emancipation of women; representative government. He had great appreciation for the power of Nationalism which had spread all over Europe after the French Revolution, and he was particularly interested in the Greek War of Independence and in the Balkans' struggle for freedom.[22] Nevertheless, he saw in the concept of patriotism a useful tool for the building up of the state power. For he understood it to mean the unquestionable and unquestioning loyalty and support of the people to a strong government, which would have absolute power to lead the country to the path of progress. Vatan-parastī was taken to be as necessary to a government as a modern press, prosperous trade and industry, efficient diplomatic representation, and strong armed forces.[23]

Mīhdī Qūlī Hidāyat, another zealous, reform-minded administrator of the time of Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah also held a profoundly traditional view of society. He wrote:

> In Iran, people in the past belonged to one of the four classes of: men of sword, men of pen, priests and peasants. It [this structure] was accepted, and no one tried to get into someone else's shoes. Each man was relatively happy within his own limit. Up to twenty years ago, neither servants claimed to be masters, nor maids claimed to be ladies, They were content, they were satisfied. . . Now they are after hollow words, dreaming of impossible hopes. . . The

> Koran does not say that men of wealth should be destroyed and their property plundered. . . In society there must be employers as well as workers.[24]

And he added:

> The French Revolution seemed to me to be groundless, even though words such as liberty, equality and especially fraternity, appealed to me. A republic looks like a school without a headmaster.[25]

Thus, during the reign of Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah, some government officials were deeply concerned with the growing problem of Iran having to cope with a threatening modern world, and they sought to find a solution. However, their ideas and approach were far from being radical, and they did not seek to challenge their basic inherited values which were Muslim as well as Persian. Nor did they mean to change the existing social and political structures. Their attitude to life and their conception of the place of the individual in society remained unchanged. They were essentially loyal to the Shah and the Qajar dynasty to whom they owed their privileges. Their greatest concern was to reinstate to Iran its past world fame, and to Islam its proper glorious rank as the superior religion. Hence, although some changes were brought in the outward forms of the government, there were practically no changes in the structure of the society. The idea of establishing reforms by overthrowing the existing order in Iran was taken up by more radical thinkers of the second half of the century.

Discontent and Revolt

1. Religious

No study of discontent and revolt in nineteenth century Iran could be complete without an understanding of the existing structure and position of religion in the society. It is therefore important for us to present here a short exposé of the religious background.

In 1501, Shah Ismāʿīl Safavī established Twelver Shīʿīsm as the state religion. The Shīʿī belief in the Imamate, an institution of a line of divinely inspired figures who are direct descendants of the Prophet Mohammed, and who are the true guides to the understanding of the prophetic revelation and, hence, the only legitimate leaders of the Muslim Community, coupled with the Twelvers' concept of the occultation of the Imam, helped the development of a distinct Twelver Shīʿī political attitude to the State. In the absence of the Hidden Imam, it denied legitimacy to the existing authority and yet, paradoxically enough, enforced a quietest acceptance of the regime. "This passivism. . . prohibited the advocacy of a total overthrow of the existing order in the name of a legitimate alternative. While the Imam remained in occultation, a shadow of illegitimacy was bound to cover all worldly strivings and activities, above all those related to

government. There was no true authority nor the possibility thereof: only power."[26]

By claiming to be himself a descendant of Mūsā al Kāzim, the seventh Imam, Shah Ismā'īl provided a legitimization and a basis for the absolute power of the monarch. Hence, a close relationship between the state and religion was established "which implied a domination of the ulama by the kingly power."[27] The official status given to the sect gave birth to an elaborate clerical class. The body of ulama that thus emerged came to assume a great role in Persian society. For in addition to their function as sole educators in the nation, since education was a religious monopoly, and to their share in the administration of justice, they acted as spiritual and practical guides of the community. The office of a Mujtahid, the highest ranking 'ālim who exercised ijtihād, the interpretation of the Muslim Law, was endowed with tremendous social prestige and power.

When the relationship between state and religion loosened under the Qajars, and when the government central power weakened, the ulama's power increased.[28] When, at times of severe political crisis the Shahs sought to use the ulama as instruments for the arousing of religious emotions against the enemy (against the Russians during the second Russo-Persian war; and against the British during the

Anglo-Persian war over Herat) the success of the religious leaders in doing so "revealed their potential strength as leaders of the nation".[29] The growing corruption of the Court, the government's financial crisis and its increased reliance on the unwise practice of granting concessions and receiving loans which established foreign economic domination in the country, gave the ulama the opportunity to assume greater power in their hands. For they took up the task of defending the nation against both a treacherous government and foreign intervention. Thus they became the leaders and principal organizers of resistance to the state. In alliance with the merchant class and a group of individual reformers, they led a "national" popular movement which succeeded in (1) revoking a controversial concession in 1891-92; (2) accomplishing the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-06.

The ulama's achievements as national resistance leaders were, however, narrow. For in their successful struggle, "they failed to perceive the nature of what was being demanded and its implication for Iran and themselves. . . Above all, they failed to provide any real answer to the manifold problems--political, social, economic--facing Iran in the second half of the nineteenth century, as a result of its own stagnation and the impact of the West."[30] They were fighting to defend, first and foremost, themselves and their vested interests which they saw as endangered by the state policies. They were blind

to the real interests of the nation itself. They thus opposed all reform projects proposed by dedicated ministers who wished to remedy the decaying situation. For they took these measures to be government actions solely aiming at curbing their power. Amīr Kabīr's attempts to reform the army and the judicial system were met by religious antagonism. Similarly, Mīrzā Husayn Khān Sipahsālār had again and again to encounter their hostility, until he fell prey to their intrigues.

On the other hand, whenever it suited their self-interest, the ulama sought the government's collaboration. The Babi episode witnessed a rapprochement between the State and themselves. Indeed it was they who throughout encouraged the government to suppress the movement.[31] As a direct consequence, Babism, which started out as a religious movement, assumed a political dimension.[32]

In both cases, opposing political reforms and religious innovations, the ulama used what constituted a coercive element of their power, namely takfīr, declaring the enemy and opponent to be an infidel. The threat of takfīr, which the ulama greatly abused, and of persecution by the established authorities encouraged the practice of taqīya, the concealment of one's true beliefs when exposed to a hostile environment. The doctrine of taqīya was already put into

practice centuries earlier by the Shīʿī as a measure of self-protection from Sunni intolerance.[33] The habit lived on through the centuries even though the original justification had ceased to exist.[34] With the emergence of Babism, and with the savage persecution of its followers by the government and the religious authorities, it became a widespread common practice among those who ever so slightly diverged from orthodoxy. The history of Babism is a bloody one and, to a great extent, revealed the ulama's characteristic intransigence and ruthlessness.

Babism, founded by Sayyid ʿAlī Muhammad who was born in Shiraz in a merchant family, started off as another heretical Shīʿī sect, a branch of Shaykhism. The Shaykhī sect is a late eighteenth century controversial movement founded by Shaykh Ahmad Ahsāʾī, which was recruited from among the most highly educated personalities of the ulama class.[35] Though it was frowned upon by the more conservative element, it nevertheless enjoyed a great measure of tolerance and freedom of expression.[36] The Shaykhis essentially believed that "the authority of God must always be present and active through an intermediary among men". The first intermediary was Muhammad and after him the twelve Imams. With the disappearance of the last one, the community should not remain without a Bāb, a gate between men and the world of the Imam.[37] Whether this concept

of an intermediary was merely an idea, or whether it was identifiable with an actual individual who would be announcing his arrival to the world, remains a controversial question. The fact is when Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī, Ahsā'ī's successor as leader of the sect, died in 1843, Sayyid ʿAlī Muhammad then claimed to be the expected Bab. ʿAlī Muhammad was, however, rejected by the new successor who, in order to eliminate suspicion, denounced the latter and his followers as impostors, and re-explained the concept of intermediary as being merely an idea.[38]

Sayyid ʿAlī Muhammad then followed a more radical course. He increased his attacks on the ulama, and began to preach his new religion divorced from Islam. No attempt will be made here to analyze the Babi philosophical and religious dogma. Suffice it to say that the revolutionary importance of Babism lies in its introducing the concept of progressive cycles of fuller revelations. It acknowledges all religions particularly Judaism, Christianity and Islam as the true words of God, revealed to mankind by rightful prophets. Just as Jesus was God's manifestation at Jesus time, and Muhammad in Muhammad time, the Bab was in 1260 A.H./1843-44. With each manifestation God reveals himself at a nobler and higher level. For each subsequent manifestation is superior to the preceding one.[39] Hence, it rejects Islam's claim to be the last divine revelation.

> As mankind advance and progress, they need fuller instruction. The child cannot be taught in the same way as the youth, nor the youth as the grown man. So it is with the human race. The instruction given by Abraham was suitable and sufficient for the people of his day, but not of those to whom Moses was sent, while this in turn had ceased to meet the needs of those to whom Christ was sent.[40]

Furthermore, Babism called for moral, social and economic reforms. It advocated novel ideas such as universal peace, world government, compulsory education, emancipation of women, equality of rights for both sexes, eradication of prejudices against non-Muslims.[41] It fought for the establishment of the rule of the Imam on earth, for the formation of the "heavenly city" in this world where Justice and Peace would reign supreme.

This faith in evolutionary progress of mankind, both materially and intellectually, coupled with the concern to reform society, could not fail to attract minds in revolt against the spiritual and social stagnation that prevailed in Iran in the mid-nineteenth century. It has been suggested that the "insurrectionary aspects of the new faith" greatly contributed to speedy conversions,[42] which included many leading ulama. Indeed, Babi attempts to overthrow orthodoxy by violence and to spread its doctrines by secret instruction inspired fierce loyalty and tenacious zeal to the point of self-sacrifice and martyrdom.

An open clash between the Bab and the religious authorities was inevitable. At first, the ulama were content with discrediting and humiliating him in public, by confronting him in debates in which he apparently performed rather poorly. He was forced to recant and was put under house arrest.[43] As the Bab's followers increased, and as his disciples began to organize revolts, drastic measures were finally taken to crush him. With the intensification of the rebellion, especially in Mazandaran and Zanjan, government troops interfered, and thus the intellectual confrontation was replaced by actual fights on the battlefield. Fatvas condemning him to death for apostasy were issued by the ulama, which were enforced by the State. On July 9, 1850, the Bab was shot to death in the citadel of Tabriz. His body was left in public for a few days, then it was thrown out of the gate of the city to be devoured by the birds of prey.[44]

The movement, however, was not crushed. Babi insurrections spread all over the country and, in 1852, an unsuccessful attempt was made at Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah's life, which only led to bloodier persecutions. Suspected Babis were massacred en masse. The cruelty of government officials was outmatched by the merciless fanaticism of mobs in the streets. The ulama had requested the Shah to entrust to the people the right to judge and execute the heretics themselves, probably hoping that this policy would help the formation

of a mass popular condemnation of the Babis, and that it would also discourage further conversions.[45]

The suppression was outwardly successful, and Babism went underground. Taqīya was more than ever practiced. The movement, however, soon split. A small minority remained faithful to the Bab's appointed successor, Subh-i Azal, after whom they were called Azalis. It is this faction that played a great role in the nationalist Constitutional Revolution. The majority chose the leadership of Bahā'ullāh who, in 1863, proclaimed himself the granter of a new religious dispensation which came to acquire a pacifist, apolitical attitude towards the State.

2. Political

The first important outbreak of political revolt took place in 1891-92, as a movement against the concession of a tobacco monopoly granted to an English company for the curing and sale of Iran's entire tobacco crop.[46] The general national boycotting of this commodity which was subsequently ordered by the religious leaders was successful,[47] for the concession touched the daily life of people from all classes and professions, and the pocket of quite a number of merchants dealing with tobacco. It was considered as a monstrous intrusion by the foreigner into

their cherished privacy. The political significance of this protest movement has been explained by Professor Keddie:

> The protest against the tobacco concession was the first successful mass movement in modern Iranian history, and led to a defeat of the government and triumph of the protesters in their demand for a total cancellation of the concession. This success undoubtedly gave courage to the conscious opponents of the government and of foreign encroachments, and led many to see for the first time that it was possible to defeat the government, even on a matter involving European interests. The movement involved the first successful alliance between the ulama, modernizing reformers, and the discontented population of Iran, particularly the merchants.[48]

Of the modernizing reformers who played some role in this movement, Jamāl ud-Dīn Afghānī and Mīrzā Malkam Khān were the most remarkable, the former by writing letters to leading Mujtahids inciting them to declare open war against the Shah; and the latter by publishing in Qānūn, a revolutionary newspaper which he owned and edited, articles denouncing the Shah and his government as traitors to their country and people. Though their participation in this revolt was motivated by less religious considerations than the ulama,[49] both believed that the time was not yet ripe to divorce their aim from that of the religious leaders. Time and circumstances demanded a unification of all elements of discontent in the struggle against the common enemy.[50] The Tobacco Affair was in fact their first opportunity to take an active part in a large-scale oppositional movement in Iran.

The national revolutionary movement intensified its action during the last decade of the century. It was led by Persian individuals who began to challenge the establishment itself, demanding not only administrative reforms, but essentially a complete change of the social and political regime. They were disillusioned with the administrative reforms undertaken by previous Ministers, and resented foreign exploitation of the country. The cancellation of the tobacco concession brought no tranquility in the country. The compensation sum for the concessionaires was high and the government had to borrow money to pay it. Hence the nation was more heavily in debt to foreigners than ever before.[51]

The nationalists struggled to put an end to these abuses, and sought to overthrow the government, and replace it with a more representative, democratic rule. The key concepts they used were Vatan (fatherland); Mashrūta (Constitution); Āzādī (Freedom); which they helped promoting among their fellow-countrymen. They were owners of and/or contributors to underground papers published abroad and smuggled into the country. The most important ones were: Qānūn, published in London by Malkam Khān; Ākhtar, published in Istanbul and which Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī helped edit for many years; Habl ul Matīn, published in Calcutta.[52] Their chief task was to open their readers' eyes to the prevailing state of

corruption, misrule and decay of their country; to teach them new terms and new ideas.

Revolutionary leaders also made great use of secrete societies, anjuman, formed in the various major cities, and where political debates and lectures helped the dissemination of revolutionary propaganda, and the distribution of underground papers which were banned by the government.[53]

In its first stage, the revolutionary movement culminated with the assassination of Nasir ud-Din Shah by Mīrzā Rizā Kirmānī, on May 1, 1896. The assassin represented most elements involved in the national opposition. He was associated with the Babis, though he denied being one; he was closely associated with Jamāl ud-Dīn Afghānī and his collaborators, Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī and Shaykh Ahmad Rūhī, though he vehemently claimed he acted alone, having taken orders from no one; last but not least, he represented the vast exploited, suffering mass who began to raise its voice of protest against the tyranny of the government, and had to suffer years of imprisonment for it.[54]

The elimination of the much hated monarch partially fulfilled the revolutionary leaders' strongest wishes, though it did not lead to the

actual overthrow of the regime. For this, they had to wait another decade.

Footnotes

1. F. Adamīyat, Amīr Kabīr va Īrān, 3rd ed., Tehran, 1348, p. 284.

2. see Ibid., pp. 295-299.

3. I. L. Bishop, Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan, London, 1891, vol. 1, p. 111.

4. I'timād us-Saltana, Rūznāma-yi Khātirāt, ed. by I. Afshār, Tehran, 1345, p. 1068. The author mentions that in 1331, 80,000 tumans were offered to the Shah, and 20,000 tumans to his Minister for the governorship of Kirman by Hisām ul-Mulk. The actual governor, Nusrat ud-Daula, was thus forced to offer the same amount in order to keep his position.

5. Reading through I'timād us-Saltana's memoirs, one is struck by the great amount of time the Shah allowed himself for such pleasure trips in comparison to the time he spent dealing with serious affairs of State.

6. Eustache de Lorey and Douglas Slade, The Moon of the Fourteenth Night, London, 1910, p. 86. Isfahānī spoke in the twentieth century and he had never been abroad. Yet, in spite of the discrepancy in the time sequence, I chose to use this citation for it adequately reflects nineteenth century feeling.

7. see Husayn ibn Abdullāh Sarābī, Makhzan ul Vaqāyi', ed. K. Esfahānīān and G. Rowshanī, Tehran, 1965, p. 270. The book is an account of Farrukh Khān Amīn ul Mulk's diplomatic mission to Paris at the Anglo-Persian Peace Conference in 1857.

8. Mujtabā Mīnovī, "Avvalīn Kārāvān-i Ma'rifat", Yaghmā, vol. 6, p. 230.

9. Mihdī Qūlī Hidāyat, Khātirāt va Khatarāt, Tehran, n.d., p. 21.

10. see his Safarnāma-yi Farangistān, Tehran, n.d.

11. Sipahsālār's letter to the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, quoted in F. Adamīyat, Fikr-i Āzādī, Tehran, 1961, p. 60.

12. K. M. Sāsānī, Sīyāsatgarān-i daura-yi Qājār, Tehran, 1959, pp. 69-70.

13. Farhād Mīrzā letters to the Sipahsālār, quoted in I. Afshār, Nathr-i Fārsī-yi Muʿasir, Tehran, 1951, p. 14.

14. Hamid Algar, Religion and State in Iran; 1785-1906: the role of the ulama in Qajar period, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969, p. 176.

15. Ibid., p. 172.

16. Ibid., p. 173.

17. Majd ul Mulk, Risāla-yi Majdīya, ed. S. Nafīsī, Tehran, 1942, p. 17.

18. see the following chapter of this thesis for more detailed analysis of his ideas.

19. Khātirāt va Khatarāt, p. 53.

20. Risāla-yi Majdīya, p. 16.

21. Ibid., p. 6.

22. see his letters published in Fikr-i Āzādī, pp. 58-60.

23. Ibid., pp. 71-72.

24. Khātirāt va Khatarāt, p. 23.

25. Ibid., p. 6.

26. Religion and State in Iran, p. 4. See also the introduction of L. Binder, Iran: Political Development in a changing society, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964.

27. Religion and State in Iran, p. 27.

28. see Nikki R. Keddie, "The Roots of the Ulama's power in modern Iran", Studia Islamica, vol. 29, 1969.

29. Religion and State in Iran, p. 93.

30. Ibid., p. 438.

31. Amīr Kabīr va Īrān, p. 442; see also Religion and State in Iran, chapter 8.

32. Religion and State in Iran, p. 438.

33. It was essentially elaborated by the Ismailis who made it "an obligatory duty of fundamental order". F. Rahman, Islam, London, 1966, p. 172. See also Religion and State in Iran, p. 3 and p. 149.

34. see Comte de Gobineau, Religions et Philosophies de l'Asie Centrale, Paris, 1899, p. 431.

35. Ibid., p. 32.

36. Religion and State in Iran, p. 149. The author states that the Shaykhis were affected by the emergence of Babism, and that they were forced to recur to taqīya to escape the wrath of the fanatic ulama. Nāsikh ul Tavārīkh also mentions that the Shaykhis were officially declared heretics during the Babi episode. Muhammad Taqī Lisān ul Mulk, Nāsikh ul Tavārīkh, ed. J. Qā'im-Maqāmī, Tehran, 1958, vol. 3, p. 75.

37. A. Bausani, cited in N. R. Keddie "Religion and Irreligion in early Iranian nationalism", Comparative studies in Society and History, vol. 4, no. 3, April 1962, p. 262.

38. Religion and State in Iran, pp. 149-150.

39. Le Beyan Persan, trans. by A. Nicholas, Paris, 1911, part 1, p. XI.

40. Anonymous Babi explaining his religion to E. G. Browne, cited in his A Year amongst the Persians, Cambridge, 1924, p. 331.

41. See chapter 5 of this thesis.

42. Religion and State in Iran, pp. 147-148.

43. see Amīr Kabīr va Īrān, pp. 439-441; Religion and State in Iran, p. 143; E. G. Browne, Materials for the study of the Babi religion, Cambridge, 1918, p. 256.

44. Nāsikh ul Tavārīkh, vol. 3, p. 101.

45. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 176. The book gives a good account of the actual massacre in Tehran where men of the streets, noblemen and royal princes alike had a hand in it.

46. see N. R. Keddie, Religion and Rebellion in Iran: the Iranian Tobacco Protest of 1891-92, London, 1966; and A. K. S. Lambton's article "The Tobacco Regie: Prelude to Revolution", Studia Islamica, vol. 22, 1965, pp. 119-157.

47. Even women of the royal harem boycotted it, following the instruction of the religious leaders. See Bāstānī Pārīsī, Talāsh-i āzādī: muhīt-i siyāsī va zindigānī-yi Mushīr ud-Daula Pīrniyā, Tehran, 1348, pp. 33-34.

48. Religion and Rebellion..., p. 1.

49. see following chapter of this thesis.

50. see Religion and State..., chapter 11 for his discussion of the relationship between the two and the ulama.

51. E. G. Browne, The Persian Revolution, 1910, p. 57.

52. For information on these papers and others see E. G. Browne, Press and Poetry in modern Persia, Cambridge, 1914.

53. A. K. S. Lambton, "Secret societies and the Persian Revolution of 1905-1906", St. Antony's Papers, vol. 4, 1958, pp. 43-60.

54. See Nāzim ul Islām Kirmānī, Tārīkh-i bīdārī-yi Irānīyān, ed. A. Sirjānī, new ed., Tehran, 1346, vol. 1, pp. 97-117 for the complete text of his interrogation.

2

AFGHĀNĪ, MALKAM, ĀKHŪNDZĀDA

Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī was greatly influenced by three contemporary Iranian thinkers: Jamāl ud-Dīn Afghānī, Mīrzā Malkam Khan, and Fath-Alī Ākhūndzāda. They provided him with a source of inspiration for his works, an ideal to follow, and a cause to support. It is therefore necessary to introduce these men in this chapter, and briefly to analyze their main ideas. Though, in order to follow a chronological order, I should start with Ākhūndzāda and end with Malkam, I have chosen to follow the order of their respective "fame". Afghānī is certainly the most well known Middle Eastern figure of the nineteenth century, and Akhūndzādā the least.

Jamāl ud-Dīn Asadabādī, known as Afghānī, is perhaps the most controversial political figure of the Middle East in the nineteenth century. A Persian by birth though during his lifetime he generally claimed to be Afghan,[1] he had a thorough Muslim upbringing, his formal education consisting of the usual religious studies of fiqh, hadith, Arabic, as well as philosophy and mysticism--two subjects which tended to attract the attention of the more talented Persian students. In his late teens he visited India where he probably underwent a profound change which helped him develop a newly awakened political consciousness. For his stay in the British colony coincided with, or came just before, the time of the Indian Mutiny of 1857,[2] a war that was largely supported by the Muslim population which suffered discrimination and loss of social status with the advent of English rule. It was probably there and then that the young man developed his strong hatred for the British, a hatred which came to characterize his political career throughout his life, and which later incited him to proclaim himself champion of the Muslim struggle against British imperialist rule.

Afghānī then travelled to the Hijaz, to Afghanistan and, in 1869, he arrived in Istanbul. In the Ottoman capital, he delivered a university lecture in which he praised philosophy and discussed prophecy in terms which were considered blasphemous by the Turkish ulama. The

latter demanded his expulsion from Ottoman territory, and it was granted.

From Istanbul Afghānī went to Cairo where he spent eight "most constructive years".[3] He succeeded in gathering around himself a group of young Egyptian and Syrian intellectuals who became his most devoted disciples. Among them was Muhammad Abduh, the noted Egyptian educator and legal reformer. Through his informal teaching, his public street speeches and his political intrigues within Freemasonic lodges in Cairo, Afghani established a solid reputation as a leading political revolutionary figure. His anti-British, anti-government activities caused the Egyptian Khedive to order his expulsion in 1879.

From Egypt, Afghānī went for the second time to India where he began to attack Sayyid Ahmad Khān, the then famous Muslim Indian reformer, in his speeches and writings as an enemy of religion and Islam in particular. The aim of his book The Refutation of the Materialists[4] was to discredit the Indian thinker, to defend Islam. In 1882, he left India for Europe.

In Paris, together with Muhammad Abduh, Jamāl ud-Dīn published an Arabic newspaper, al-ʿUrwa al Wuthqa, (the strongest link),

which reflected the same defensive pan-Islamic mood, and violent anti-British sentiment. He also got in touch with Ernest Renan, a French writer, self-proclaimed atheist who had specifically denounced Islam as a backward faith, incompatible with science and responsible for the Muslim world's decay and intellectual stagnation. In a newspaper article addressed to the journalist, Afghānī revealed himself to be as critical and as sceptical of his religion as the Frenchman was, though he was aware of its social function as a means to civilize primitive nations.[5]

In London, Afghānī got to know Wilfrid Blunt, a pro-Arab English amateur politician who had important connections within the British government circles, and who introduced him to some leading political figures. With this useful contact, Afghānī became active in political intrigues and schemes aiming at settling the Egyptian and Sudanese questions. His efforts, however, were fruitless. He then looked elsewhere for a more fertile ground to plant his revolutionary seeds.

After a two-year visit to Russia where he also managed to talk to leading statesmen, he went back to Iran once in 1886-87 and then again at the end of 1889, a most opportune time, for the growing number of concessions given to foreigners and government corruption

were causing strong reactions among the merchant and intellectual classes. Though he did not remain in Iran to witness the resulting victory of the tobacco boycott--for the Shah, alarmed at his activities, had him expelled from the holy shrine where he had taken refuge and forced into exile[6]--Afghānī helped keep up the spirit of revolt by sending from abroad anti-Shah letters to prominent ulama.[7] The success of the revolt was primarily due to the unified effort of religious leaders, merchants and intellectuals, and his own role in it was not so prominent as his followers and admirers claimed it to be. Nevertheless,

> Afghani's use of religious appeals to unite all segments of population against government policies, and his training of disciples in the methods of oppositional organization and propaganda, helped encourage...mass protest.[8]

Afghānī's part in the Tobacco Concession Affair marked the peak of his career as a political revolutionary leader.

The last six years of his life were spent in hopeless struggles to promote his political projects, especially his pan-Islamic scheme. Following a short visit to London where he joined Malkam Khān who shared his violent hatred for Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah and bitterly campaigned to denounce the corruption of the Persian government, he accepted the Ottoman's Sultan's invitation to go to Istanbul. Once again he met only disillusionment for, contrary to his expectations,

he was given no major responsible position. In fact, his relations with Abdul Hamid steadily declined. The crowd of revolutionary Persians in exile, which included Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī and Mīrzā Rizā, he gathered around himself, increased the monarch's suspicion. And though, after the Shah's assassination, Abdul Hamīd refused to extradite Afghānī as the Persian government requested, he was closely watched by the Ottoman authorities till he died in 1897, of cancer of the chin.

Jamāl ud-Dīn's wide ranging activities, together with his self-proclaimed mission as Islam's champion and revolutionary leader induce us to regard him more as a Muslim than a Persian national figure. Whether he was a true believer as Gibb[9] and Vasiqi[10] assume, or irreligious as Kedourie claims,[11] or an Islamic deist as Keddie surmises,[12] the fact remains that he took up the task of re-interpreting Islam in the light of modern rational sciences, in order to help the Muslim umma regain its past glory and power. To the Westerners he attempted to show that Islam is not incompatible with modern scientific discoveries; to fellow Muslim westernizers he sought to present Reason and Science as being an integral part of Islamic tradition and Faith. The genuineness of his concern for the Muslim's political decay and inner moral weakness, and of his desire to warn them against growing European, especially British, encroachment

is beyond doubt. The fact that his aim was "the subversion of the Islamic religion and the method adopted to this end was the practice of a false but showy devotion"[13] does not in the least undermine his role as a political educator and leader of the rising Middle Eastern nationalism. The now famous sentence quoted from one of Muhammad Abduh's letters to him: "We do not cut the head of religion except with the sword of religion"[14] clearly indicates Afghānī's cautious choice of the weapon used to awaken the Muslim's political consciousness. Since he extensively used the newspaper medium, a medium which he seemed to have greatly appreciated as a useful political weapon in order to reach the widest possible audience,[15] it was imperative for him to be so cautious. Perhaps he knew that the time was not yet ripe to appeal to the Islamic world in a more secular tone. He therefore addressed his public in a language that sounded more familiar and less shocking. His savage attack, in The Refutation of the Materialists, on Sayyid Ahmad Khān, which was motivated by the latter's Anglophilia--a sentiment his own strong anti-British feeling must have found particularly distasteful and unpatriotic[16]--was serving a double purpose: (1) it showed him as a devout Muslim; (2) it helped him to denounce the Indian Muslim traitor who dared befriend the hated enemy.

Here we must remark, however, that Afghānī himself, in writing

this pamphlet and in attacking so vehemently the Indian writer, might not necessarily have been conscious of his own ambiguity. We must not overlook the fact that he came from a traditional Muslim society where patriotism--the people's sense of loyalty to the state and to fellow countrymen, sense of belonging to one political entity defined, not by their membership to a village, a professional guild, a Sufi order or a tribe, not by their belief in a common Faith, but in terms of definite geographic boundaries, a common language and a common history--was a totally alien concept. It is therefore natural that Afghānī himself would identify patriotic and religious zeal and, in true Muslim fashion, make no distinction between "state" and "church". He may have followed the "Muslim Philosophers' traditional attitude towards the role of prophecy and revealed religions as chiefly legal and social",[17] a useful means to civilize a backward people. He may have shared their view of philosophy as a science above religion and capable of reaching higher truth. He in fact wrote:

> Its [philosophy] aim is human perfection in reason, mind, soul and way of life... It is the first cause of man's intellectual activity and his emergence from the sphere of animals.[18]

Nevertheless, this pragmatic approach to religion and this faith in philosophy are basically intellectual attitudes concerning intellectual issues of Absolute Truth and Knowledge, not so directly concerned with such political matters as patriotism. After all, Ibn Sīnā thought and wrote as a Muslim philosopher and not as a Persian. Afghānī, in

his political activities and thought, in his search for "national" identity, had to fall back on the Islamic umma, rather than on a Persian, Turkish or Arab nation. For, culturally, Jamāl ud-Dīn was a Muslim, and he seemed not to have been too keen on assuming another narrower identity. We shall see that Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, quite unlike him, would, on the contrary, stress his "Persianness", and promote the concept of a Persian nation as opposed to an Arab or Turkish one.

Afghānī chose a more traditional path in his quest for a solution to the crucial problems brought by Western encroachment throughout the Muslim world. In fact, he restated the old Mohammadan concept of the umma as Dar al-Islam (abode of Islam), as a separate socio-political entity in opposition to the Dar al-Harb (abode of War), the outside world. Nineteenth century political circumstances in the Middle East quite justified his choice of updating the Muslim belief that there is a constant state of war between the two. Hence, we fail to see the fact that Afghani's political activism led to "the transformation of religion into a political ideology" as such an unorthodox deed as Professor Kedourie implies.[19] Islam is a religion as well as a way of life, and

> The Qur anic body of statements is both universal and concrete to inculcate a definite attitude to life: it enunciates not only eternal spiritual and moral principles, but also guided Muhammad and

> the early Community through their struggles against the Meccan and Jewish enemies and Hypocrites and in the constructive task of the nascent society and state.[20]

To Afghānī, nineteenth century enemies of the Muslim state were the European Great Powers. His greatest mistake, however, lay in his failure to acknowledge in earnest that political fragmentation within the umma had already been a fait accompli centuries earlier; and consequently, his task of reconstructing, or rather resurrecting it was doomed from the start. His project was neither modern enough to serve as a valid alternative to the idea of secular nationalism which was beginning to be known in the Middle East; nor was it strong enough to appeal to the greater mass of politically apathetic Muslims. Indeed, the Muslim practice of stressing the religious aspects of Islam to the point of highly neglecting its political aspects, was another fait accompli centuries earlier.

One should also add that his contemporary Muslim rulers' petty rivalry, their fear of change which could have been to their own detriment, their general suspicion of all and everyone; together with Afghānī's own complex political activities, the ease with which he shifted alliances and allegiances, unscrupulously and inconsistently, depending on where his self-interest lay,[21] his delusion of grandeur and the paranoic hatred he often felt for his opponents, all were major factors that contributed to this failure.[22]

Yet, Afghānī's works and activities were not all without positive results. He was too striking a personality not to leave any impact on his contemporaries, not to influence the major trends that were bringing rapid changes in Middle Eastern society. In spite of their different approaches, almost all scholars and acquaintances who wrote about him recognize the charismatic appeal he held over the masses which he knew how to manipulate. A contemporary French journalist described him as "le type du dominateur des foules."[23] His disciples and immediate followers venerated him, even worshipped him.[24] He was the first Muslim leader to have strongly urged his fellow Muslims to study modern sciences, to seek enlightenment and progress through the use of their Reason, to educate themselves for "man is man because of education".[25] By attempting to uphold Islam as the true religion, and interpreting it as a progressive and rational ideology, Afghānī founded a "non-secular" national movement which was to play a part in the history of the Middle East at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth. It was a movement that positively stirred the imagination of the first generation of intellectual leaders by appealing to their sense of pride in their cultural tradition, and by fomenting in them a strong determination to help Islam regain its power. The fact that this movement was relatively short-lived, as it was finally swept away with the rise of a more secular nationalism, does not diminish its importance. As

Professor Keddie remarks:

> Whatever later historians may conclude about his exact influence, his position as a precursor and early teacher of anti-imperialism, nationalism, solidarity against the West, and self-strenghtening reform--all of which causes have grown and flourished since his lifetime--seems secure.[26]

Mīrzā Malkam Khān was born in 1833 in Julfa, the Armenian suburb near Isfahan. When he was seventeen years old, his father, Mirza Yaʿqūb, an Armenian convert to Islam who was then working as interpreter in the Russian Embassy, sent him to Paris to study under the auspices of an Armenian society. Within a few years, Malkam acquired a good knowledge of French and English, of natural sciences, engineering and law. In 1851, with this useful learned acquisition in hand, a commodity that was already much in demand in the Persian government circles, he came back to his native country, ready to set up for himself a brilliant political career. In the early 1850s, Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah's court was open to ambitious politicians who, on the one hand, were well versed with European ideas and customs and were full of plans and schemes for a quick modernization of Iran; and on the other, were familiar with Persian court manners and know-how to approach the Monarch. All these were necessary qualities which Malkam possessed.

Upon his return to Tehran, Malkam established his first contact with the Court by becoming its official interpreter. He also succeeded in getting a teaching position in the very much en vogue Dār ul-Funūn. In no time at all, he attracted the attention of a then prominent statesman, Mīrzā ʿAlī Khān Amīn ud-Daula, whom he accompanied as consultant in various trips to Europe. In 1856, he

went to Paris as interpreter and political advisor to Farrokh Khān Amīn ul-Mulk, the Shah's envoy to the Anglo-Persian peace conference.

A few years later, Malkam's first clash with the Court occurred, which led to his first enforced exile. In 1858, he had established the Farāmūshkhāna, a society organized in a system of secret cells and hierarchical administration similar to the Freemasonic lodges. We shall speak later of the importance and function of this society. Suffice it to say here that the semi-secret, rather revolutionary ways of this party which recruited its members from among the aristocracy, Royal family and young students of Dār ul-Funūn, aroused the Shah's suspicion, and it was soon banned. Malkam's numerous enemies within the royal circle helped a great deal to undermine his position in the Court. There were many Ministers and officials who wished to get rid of him, for he had openly attacked them as corrupt and inefficient, in the written reform projects he had submitted to the Shah. In 1863, together with other political personae non grata, all labelled bīdīn, irreligious, he went first to Baghdad, then to Istanbul.

In the Ottoman capital, Malkam remained idle for a while, without work and without influence. It is said about him that during those days he had decided to reconvert to Christianity in order to

marry the daughter of an Armenian high priest. It is also said that he had given up his Persian citizenship to become a naturalized Ottoman subject, in order to find employment with the Ottoman government.[1] Though it is difficult to establish the veracity of these stories, they nevertheless cast a doubt on the sincerity of Malkam's national and religious loyalty to Iran and Islam.

Malkam's star began to shine again when the Persian Ambassador to the Ottoman Court, Mīrzā Husayn Khān Mushīr ud-Daula, a reformer attracted by his ideas, decided to attach him to his service and to seek the Shah's pardon for him. The Minister's patronage not only gave Malkam the opportunity to submit his reform projects to the government, but also provided him with a sometimes much needed cover-up for his dubious deeds. Thus, during a brief stay in Cairo as Consul-General when he had allegedly accepted a "gift" of 10,000 tumans from Khedive Ismā'īl, the Persian Embassy prevented the scandal from exploding by immediately recalling him to Istanbul.[2] In 1871, when Mīrzā Husayn Khān became Sadr-i A'zam (Prime Minister), Malkam was given a position as Councillor to him, and a new title: Nāzim ul-Mulk. Shortly before the Shah's first visit to Europe, in 1873, which Mīrzā Husayn Khān had advised, Malkam was sent to London as Consul to make the necessary arrangements. In 1878, he successfully represented Iran in the Berlin Conference.

As a reward for this diplomatic mission, he was promoted to ambassadorial rank and given the title of Prince. Four years later, he was once more honoured with the Shah's favour, this time receiving the title of Nāzim ud-Daula.

Malkam's relationship with the Court and the Shah began to deteriorate with the notorious case of a Lottery Concession in January 1889, which decisively ruined his career, and precipitated his downfall. Nāsir ud-Dīn had granted him, in return for the sum of 1,000 pounds, the monopoly for a state lottery. This concession was subsequently bought by a British syndicate for 40,000 pounds. Malkam's greatest enemy at that time, the then Prime Minister Amīn us-Sultān, had it revoked, thanks to a fatva from the ulama denouncing the deal as forbidden by Islam for its gambling nature. The money paid by the syndicate was not refunded, and this had the effect of discrediting Persia on the stock exchange.[3] Malkam himself was discredited and removed from his position as Persian Ambassador.

This break with the Persian Court incited the reformer to adopt a less compromising, more revolutionary policy.[4] He founded in London a newspaper called Qānūn (Law) to which he devoted all his energy and attention. The first number was published in February 20, 1890. The main content of the paper was sharp criticisms against

the prevailing social and economic backwardness of Iran, its political corruption, and it called for the establishment of Law, a National Assembly, representative government. The paper was banned in the country, but it succeeded in circulating clandestinely.

It is only after the death of Amīn us-Sultān, and during the premiership of Amīn ud-Daula, that Malkam's position in the Persian Court improved. In 1898, Muzaffar ud-Dīn Shah named him Persian Ambassador to Rome, and reinstated his titles. Thus in the last ten years of his life, he enjoyed again the prestige and privileges of a Persian envoy to a European Court. He died in 1908 in Rome.

This brief survey of Malkam's life mainly depicts him as a typical nineteenth century Persian politician, ambitious and quick to seize any opportunity to promote his financial and social interests; capable of reaching high positions thanks partly to his own intelligence and great abilities, and partly to influential men's patronage; and yet vulnerable to enemies' attacks and intrigues to discredit him. What differentiates him from his contemporary colleagues, however, what raises him far above the cunning and pettiness of the vain, egoistic, scheming Siyāsatgarān (politicians), is the genuineness of his reforming spirit, and the talented, powerful pen he used to promote his ideas.[5] Malkam liked to call himself "Prince Reformateur", and he

sincerely believed in the sacredness of the mission he set up for himself. He had submitted many written reform proposals to Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah. We shall first study these projects before turning to his more revolutionary ideas, those addressed to a larger audience than the Court, as expressed mainly in Qānūn.

Malkam's Reform Projects

From the earliest years of his political career Malkam justified his self-appointed task to reform Iran in order to save her from the decline she was rapidly sinking to, by claiming he was the right person for the job because:

> I have been to Europe; I have spent ten years of my life thinking about these problems; I have studied Economics which is the broadest and most comprehensive of all sciences. And because human Reason [which some Persian Ministers possess] without science is worth nothing.[6]

Complaining of Iran's backwardness, which prevails in spite of the wealth of its natural resources, and which he attributes to scientific ignorance and to archaic beliefs and methods of government, he emphatically asserts that time for change has come. The present age is an age of fast travelling, of railways, of science and technology and no more of "Arabic expressions and Arabic poetry." Furthermore, it is no longer the age of national isolation. He writes:

> The time that allowed a country to build a wall around itself, and to say to outsiders: "This is

> my property, and I do not want to follow the progress of this age", is gone. Now the neighboring countries reply: "Yes, this is your property. But world progress concerns all mankind."[7]

The Persian nation, Malkam adds, is clinging to the memory of its past, and is thus cutting itself from Europe, this part of the world where science flourished and where time kept up its progressive march. "Most of us cannot conceive as yet their progress. Yet it is real!" He puts the blame on the government ministers who have failed to see this backwardness, and who have thus betrayed their fatherland by remaining inactive. He declares the reforms undertaken by previous ministers following the moral shock felt after suffering military defeats in the hands of the Russians, to be superfluous and inadequate. Military power, he rightly asserts, cannot be regained by reforming the army alone. What constitutes the power of Western armies is more than efficient military organization. It is a consequence of efficient organization within the entire government machinery, at all levels of its bureaucracy.

> By reforming the army alone...while the government administration still ran according to laws and customs that went back to the times of Jamshid and the Tatar sovereigns, they [the Ministers] were convinced that they could bring the Persian army up to the level of Western forces.[8]

How could one reform an army, he asks, by merely changing the soldiers' uniforms? It is like painting a house with a rotten foundation.

What Malkam then suggests is to study carefully the European system of government in all its aspects, and to establish it in Iran, by setting up similar laws, similar ministries and bureaucracy. He claims it is the best in the world because, just as the Europeans have invented the telegraph system by following scientific principles, they have established their government system following exact scientific rules and regulations. And hence:

> Just as one can bring to Iran the telegraph from Europe, one can likewise take the principles of their government system, and establish it without any delay. As I have often said, and I still repeat it: "You cannot invent this system all by yourself, just as you cannot study the science of telegraph all on your own.[9]

In fact, Malkam's belief in Western scientific superiority is often stated in most of his essays. He emphasizes the fact that "we, people of Asia, have no right to interfere with matters of such higher arts".

The reformer dramatically sounds the alarm by predicting that if reforms are not immediately undertaken to modernize, the country will perish. Government decay opens the way to Western Powers who are busy "annihilating the barbaric nations."

> This powerful flood the West is pushing its way across the whole world, and begins by invading the most rotten soil. Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, China, Japan, Kabul...India...were all flooded. See how ignorant we are that we want to stop this world conquering flood with our bare hands...With

> such low budget, with such Ministers, with such a government, and with such a poor science, we wish to face the might of Europe...!
>
> By God, it is impossible! By God, it cannot be! We either have to lift ourselves from this base world up to the level of Europe within the next two or three years, or from now on we should consider ourselves as already drowned and buried by the European flood.[10]

In short, Malkam's message is: either westernize or perish. Since he was quite aware of the difficult, in fact dangerous, position this would put him in vis à vis the ulama, he carefully proclaims that imitating the West would in no way contradict the Islamic Shariat, and thus it should not be forbidden. He argues that he proposes to borrow only the political system which would in no way affect the religious life of the Persian citizens. Politics and religion, he states, are two separate spheres.[11] Obviously Malkam wished to overlook the contradiction inherent in his proposal, namely, by divorcing the state from religion he actually opposes one of the most fundamental principles of Islam which identifies the one with the other. He firmly believed, or wished to make believe, that by establishing the appropriate reforms, Iran would progress "...without committing any injustice, without opposing the Holy Law, without problems and without losses..."[12]

Malkam was also taking into consideration the fact that he was proposing his reforms to the Shah himself. He thus hails the latter as

the greatest ruler Iran ever had, as a sincere reformer, as an enlightened monarch whose sole aim in life is his nation's progress.[13] The Shah, Malkam says, is not responsible for Iran's backwardness for, although he holds an absolute power, his inept and corrupt Ministers, together with the archaic bureaucracy, in fact render him powerless.[14]

This great concern in wooing Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah's favorable reception to his project compelled Malkam to offer a plan that would be palatable to the Royal taste. Here is, in brief, his plan for administrative reforms. He begins by explaining that a government is just and efficient only when the ruling power is divided into two sections, a legislative and an executive, each held by a different individual or group of individuals. He expresses his firm belief that no government can survive if one person only monopolizes the two functions.[15] The existing monarchical systems of government in contemporary Europe, he goes on explaining, are of two kinds: absolute and constitutional. The first type of monarch holds both powers in his hands; the second holds only the executive, leaving to an Assembly the power to legislate. In a clever, but unconvincing, compromising tone the able diplomat suggests that since constitutional monarchy is incompatible with prevailing conditions in Iran, absolute monarchy best fits this nation. For, he claims, an "enlightened, absolute

sovereign like Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah would certainly not abuse the power he possesses." He would share with a cabinet of appointed ministers the executive power, and with an Assembly representing all classes and all professions the legislative power.[16] The Assembly's primary function would be the enacting of a code of law, Qānūn, that establishes, organizes and defines the function of the government administration. It in itself has no administrative function, nor a political one. Consequently, aliens could be admitted to it as members. Malkam stresses the need of foreign advice and help in this most important question of establishing an efficient and productive government machinery. The Assembly, on the other hand, cannot enact or even discuss any law without the Shah's personal consent. And this is Malkam's concession to the Shah: the Assembly, which he calls Majlis-i Tanzimat, and which nominally possesses the legislative power, in fact does nothing but carry out the orders of the Shah. For it has to be instituted by the ruler himself since only he has the right and power to do so. Malkam explicitly remarks:

> This Assembly should not be confused with the type of assemblies called: Parliament, or National Assembly, or Assembly of Deputies. It has no relations to any of these.[17]

The cabinet should include eight Ministers: of Justice, Foreign Affairs, Interior, War, Sciences, Trade, Taxes, the Court, each heading a respective ministry. They are appointed by the Shah to whom they are responsible. Their function is to see that the laws, as

enacted by the Assembly, are executed. In fact, Malkam's plan leaves the Ministers totally powerless and subject to the Shah's will.[18]

Obviously then, Malkam's compromise was ineffective. What he succeeded in doing was mainly to adopt from the liberal West names and theoretical concepts of government without putting into effect the real purpose of the European systems. Namely, to provide the government body with the legal means to check the power of the absolute monarch. Consequently, his lengthy discussions of Qānūn, people's rights, equality, liberty, security, freedom of opinion, the government's duty towards its subjects,[19] and the strict penal measures he suggests for punishing corruption and treason,[20] remain futile. For as long as the ruler holds both powers, as long as he has the right to dismiss cabinet and assemblies, the evil of despotism would still be in effect. This is precisely what he had warned against in his various proposals. Yet he was unable to reconcile his need for political compromise with his wish to reform the system. In fact, Malkam confused Enlightened Despotism, which he was really aiming at, with Constitutionalism which he ideally believed in. His mistake, therefore, was to believe that enlightened despotism could be effectively established in Iran. He saw himself as the Voltaire of Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah whom he actually compared to Peter the Great of Russia and to Frederick the Great of Prussia.[21] One would even venture to say that

Malkam was thinking of molding the Qajar ruler to the image of these rulers.

The reformer was also in favor of boosting the Persian economy by establishing close trade and business relations with the international world of finance. He felt his country's need for good roads and adequate means of communication, for banks, and for ready capital to exploit the rich natural resources. He thought the solution lay with the unconditional granting of concessions to foreign investors. He surmised that Iran, which had neither the power nor the necessary tools to develop her potential wealth on her own, had nothing to lose. For the economic development the foreign companies would succeed in achieving would be in itself a generous compensation for the concessions.[22] National independence would also be insured; for the West, in order to protect their vested interests, would see to it that no single power should conquer the country.[23]

Such a naive belief in Europe's altruism matched Malkam's respect for Europe. Even though he deplored European imperialism and feared its "flooding force", he nevertheless blindly admired it, and even dreamt of the time when Iran, once restored to its might, would become an imperialist power in its own right. He explicitly remarked that, had Iran been reformed some twenty to thirty years

ago, "she would have by now been master of Asia."[24]

Closely linked to his interests in administrative and economic reforms, was his concern for the Persian alphabet. Malkam, it is suggested, first heard about the problem from his father who was already aware of the necessity for an alphabet reform. Yet his active contribution to this project came only in 1868, in conjunction with Akhūndzāda.[25] He believed:

> The ignorance of the people of Islam and the separation from present day progress are caused by the defectiveness of the alphabet. The dilapidation of the highways, the abundance of cruelty and oppression, the scarcity of justice and equity--these too, are caused by the defectiveness of the alphabet.[26]

Unlike Akhūndzāda, however, he did not favor the abandonment of the Arabic script and the adoption of Roman and Cyrillic script. He was quite aware of the religious attachment to the former. One should always bear in mind the fact that Malkam, in spite of his urgent call for rapid westernization, "held religion, in the existing state of civilization in the Muslim countries, to be a social necessity, since popular morality was still tied to religious beliefs. Moreover, Islam, far from being destroyed, should be used as a vehicle for the introduction of European inspired reforms."[27]

Later on, however, he set up to invent a new alphabet based on a

simplified Arabic alphabet, and, in 1885, he published in London Sa'dī's Gulistān with the new characters.[28] But this project failed to stir people's interest, and was therefore never taken up seriously.

Malkam's Revolutionary Ideas

It was Malkam's newspaper Qānūn, and the revolutionary socio-political ideas he preached in it, that ultimately proved to be of greater value and influence. Having broken relations with the Persian Court, he felt freer to express his thoughts. Whereas he previously wished to consider himself as the Voltaire to an enlightened despot, Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah, he now took up a broader task to educate and awaken the Persian people in general, and to help them establish a more democratic government. To the cry for a fixed code of law is now added a demand for a Parliament representing the people, free to discuss all matters connected with the welfare of the state, the members of which shall enjoy the privilege of immunity, for whatever they may lawfully say or do in the discharge of their functions. In the second number of the paper, he writes:

> The number of Councillors in the Council of State is now very small. As far as possible, this Assembly must be enlarged. Great divines, eminent men of learning, capable mullas, and the chief men of every province--even young men possessed of learning--must be members of this supreme Council.
>
> The leaders of Church and State, and all persons of intelligence, must, in response to the demands of this

> time for increased watchfulness, write to support this Assembly, and seek by every means to make the Persian people understand that the regeneration of Persia depends on carrying out the Law, and that carrying out the Law depends on the consideration and authority enjoyed by this Assembly.[29]

Malkam showed greater faith than before in the spirit of the Persian people in general, and prophetically announced:

> Certain nerveless and poor spirited beings, who always judge the character of others by their own base nature, say that Persia has lost all feeling and perception, and that these words can no longer produce any effect. It is true that our small-minded grandees have, so far as they were able, established the market of shamelessness in these our days; but they will shortly see that Persia is not quite desolate, and that the spirit of manhood still survives in it.[30]

Malkam's change of attitude towards the Shah is also noticeable. In one issue of Qānūn, he printed, without comment, the letter of a reader who blamed the Shah for the prevailing disorder, and attacked the Qānūn for criticizing only the Ministers. He asked:

> Who and what are these Ministers? Who chose them? Who except the Shah could find such Ministers in the world... We have no right to find fault with Amīn us-Sultān. If he were to disappear, the Shah himself would certainly produce someone of even more obscure origin and detestable attributes. The Shah undoubtedly dislikes worthy and capable men.[31]

Malkam even came to condemn the granting of concessions to foreigners, a practice which he himself had promoted during his years in office.

> According to the Holy Law of Islam and the Law of all States, these commercial transactions are the rightful property of the people of this country. They

> are the means whereby and the capital whereon we subsist. How do they dare to sell to unbelievers the means of livelihood of the Muslims? Are the people of Persia, then, really dead that they thus put up their inheritance to auction?[32]

Such remarks were obviously aiming at reconciling the ulama to his intentions, and at proving to them that he was taking his religion and that of the people into serious consideration. In an essay written somewhat later, Malkam adopted a more inflammatory tone. He said from time immemorial prophets, philosophers and poets believed that injustice could be eliminated by counseling the oppressor himself to rule justly. Time and experience however, he went on, had shown the futility of this procedure for change is not brought about by the oppressor. At the turn of the century, men found out that attention should be directed to the oppressed himself, and attempts made at awakening him.

> O you ass! You who in strength, number and ability surpass the oppressor, why do you bear such injustice? Awake from this sleep of ignorance! Burn the oppressor![33]

And thus, Malkam concluded, people succeeded in establishing a code of Law which protects their rights.

In other essays not published in Qānūn, and therefore accessible only to a smaller public, he kept up the same spirit of revolt. He attacked the ulama, declaring them to be the worst enemies of Iran's progress and liberty.[34] In Manāfi'-i āzādī, he quotes J. S. Mill

saying that human beings could progress only when they enjoy full liberty and freedom of opinion. The Europeans were able to progress when they threw off the heavy yoke of Catholic beliefs and revolted against the authority of the Pope.[35] In Hurriyyat he explains how Mirabeau, the French revolutionary, declared that men lost their "spiritual freedom because of the dictatorship of their religious leaders, and their physical freedom because of the dictatorship of their political leaders"; and how he incited the Frenchmen to revolt and fight for their liberty, happiness and human rights.[36]

We have already mentioned that Malkam, in his early political career in Tehran, had set up a society called Farāmūshkhāna, following the Freemasonic system of lodges and cells, hierarchical order and secret instructions. It is not to be confused with the real Freemasonic lodge founded in the Persian capital in April 1906, and which had no relations with Malkam's.[37] Malkam's purpose in establishing it was to organize a small group of Persians, to introduce them to new concepts and ideas about the Principles of Humanity, Usūl-i ādamīyyat; Fundamental Rights of the Individual, Huqūq-i asāsī-yi fard; and the like. He also wished to create among them a strong sense of solidarity and brotherhood. We have seen how Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah came to suspect and ban the society. Malkam, however, further developed his new "ideology" in Qānūn. Obviously inspired

by Auguste Comte's Religion de l'Humanité, his aim was to invent a new religion Ādamīyyat, Humanity, which would combine Judeo-Christian and Muslim teachings.[38] This new Faith would proclaim man's right to worship freely whatever suits him best, as long as it follows the "law of world order", and as long as he is guided by Reason and true Faith.[39] It hailed man as the most perfect of all living beings, capable of progress and self-improvement. For man's ultimate goal in life should be to avoid evil and to accomplish good; abolish oppression; reach common agreement with his fellow-men; seek knowledge; to preserve Law and Order and to promote the cause of Humanity.[40]

> Humanity means serving the world.
> Man means he who seeks true life.
> Man means saviour of the world.[41]

Essentially, this new religion calls for revolt against oppression.

> Where am I? In the prison of oppression.
> What must be done? The walls of this prison must be destroyed.
> With what power?
> With the power of Humanity.[42]

It is difficult to determine the importance of the role played by the newspaper Qānūn in the Iranian national awakening. We know that it did circulate in the country, and that it was read regularly by Persian exiles in Istanbul. We know that it greatly alarmed the Shah and his Ministers, and that men of good position were imprisoned and punished for reading it or having it in their possession.[43]

The man himself, however, who came to be known as Mīrzā Malkam Khān Qānūnī, undoubtedly left a great impact on the people who knew him directly or through his work.[44] His contemporary admirers and followers considered him to be "a first class philosopher and teacher" comparable to Aristotle and Plato, the "Voltaire, Rousseau and Victor Hugo of Iran".[45] Wilfred Blunt spoke of this "little old man with a long nose and very black eyes" as the "most remarkable man" he ever met.[46] Whereas revolutionary men like Nāzim ul Islām see him as "the first person to have planted the seed of Law in this country",[47] his numerous enemies in the Royal circle denounced him viciously. Muhammad Hasan Khān I'timād us-Saltana, for instance, a Court official somewhat envious of Malkam's early prominence and prestige, dismissed him as a traitor and hypocrite; and Armenian unworthy of a noble Persian title, who owed his good fortune only to the fact that he had been to Europe, and had gotten acquainted with some Western languages.[48]

The fact remains, however, that the incomparable simplicity of style and expression of Qānūn produced a tremendous effect upon his readers. And several new terms, such as Qānūn, Law; Tanzīmāt, reform; usūl-i idāra, administrative regulations... passed from this newspaper into the current Persian revolutionary language. Malkam was rightly considered as the father of Persian journalism, and the

renovator of the Persian style of writing. His new religion of Ādamīyyat was a total failure for there were no serious converts to it. It nevertheless provided the basic moral principles to an important secret political party known as Jāmi'-i Ādamīyyat. Founded by 'Abbās Qūlī Khān after Nāsir ud-Dīn's death, it played a major role in the struggle for the Constitutional Revolution.

Fath-ʿAlī Ākhūndzāda was born in 1812 in Nukha, a small town in Azerbaijan which was to be annexed by Russia in 1828. His paternal grandfather was from Rasht (the main town of the Gaspian province Gilan); his father from Tabriz; and his mother from Maraghan. Thus by descent he was really an Iranian. In fact he proudly claimed to be of "Parsee" origin, and considered Iran to be his vatan (fatherland). When he was barely seven years old, his parents divorced and he went to live together with his mother with the latter's uncle in Ardabil, a small town in Persian Azerbaijan. At the age of thirteen, his great uncle was transferred to a small town in Caucasus, and he took them along with him. Following the Russo-Persian War of 1828, the small family decided to settle in Nukha, Fath-ʿAlī's birthplace.

Nukha was then a predominantly Shīʿī town, and the young man was given a traditional Shīʿī education. He studied religious sciences, logic, jurisprudence, Arabic, Persian and Turkish. His family wished to see him follow a religious career. Ākhūndzāda, however, soon decided otherwise. Under the supervision of private tutors and learned friends, he began to study philosophy and Sufi mysticism. At the age of 22, he went to Tiflis where he studied Russian. He then acquired an important position as translator into Oriental languages in the service of the Viceroy of the Caucasus in Tiflis, a position which he was to retain for the rest of his life.

Tiflis was then an established cultural center of the Caucasus. Ākhūndzāda had thus the opportunity to meet many prominent Armenian, Georgian and Russian intellectuals--mostly revolutionary poets, writers, journalists--who introduced him to Western philosophical and political ideas.

In 1848, Ākhūndzāda visited Iran in the company of General Shilling, the Russian envoy to Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah's coronation. In 1863, he went to Istanbul to present his alphabetical reform project to the Ottoman Scientific Society. He stayed at the Persian Embassy, as personal guest of the Ambassador, Mīrzā Husayn Khān Mushīr ud-Daula whom he had previously met in Tiflis. Apart from these two short trips outside Caucasus, Ākhūndzāda remained in Tiflis until he died in February 1878.[1]

Ākhūndzāda was the first Iranian to have written plays (in Turkish but later translated into Persian); to have seriously thought of, and worked on, a revised script for Persian and Turkish languages; and to have openly rejected Islam as an obstacle to progress and to the promulgation of the "new science". For the main purpose of our study here, we shall analyze only those ideas and reform projects that directly concern the main trend towards modernization in Iran during the second half of the nineteenth century. The essential part

of his thought is expressed in a single unpublished work, Sa Maktūb (Three Epistles) which he wrote in 1863.[2] In spite of its title, the book is in fact one long essay criticizing the backward conditions prevailing in Iran. It is written in the form of a letter from one fictional Prince Kamāl ud-Daula, a Persian residing in India who was passing by Azerbaijan on his way back from Europe; to another fictional Prince Jalāl ud-Daula, living in Tehran. The last two pages consist of the latter's reply to it. Additional material related to Ākhūndzāda's main ideas and projects are gathered from his private correspondence with contemporary Persian Ministers and government officials, Malkam Khan included.[3]

Ākhūndzāda's chief task was to attempt to awaken the Muslim nations from their centuries-long social and intellectual torpor, and to guide them to the path of civilization and progress. To achieve that purpose, he had to bring to light the most formidable obstacles to it, and show the way to surmount them.

> I perceived that the Islamic faith and fanaticism represented an obstacle to the diffusion of civilization among the Muslim peoples. I therefore set myself the task of sundering the foundations of that faith, of extirpating fanaticism and dissipating the dark ignorance of the peoples of the East.[4]

In a remarkably rational way, he endeavors to point to the fallacious notions inherent in the basic beliefs of Islam, and of religion in general. One of the most important issues he deals with is the

question of the existence of God. The argument he uses to prove his non-existence is that of the empiricists and naturalists. He states: the world exists, and there can be only two alternative explanations for this existence:

1. The world exists on its own, regulated by its own rules, and in no need of a Creating Being. In that case, the author surmises, one can assume "together with Pétrarque and Voltaire "that all beings constitute one complete Force, that is, one complete Existence, which manifests itself in various shapes and forms, deterministically governed by fundamental laws. These laws control all life, be it animal, vegetable or human. In the latter case, the man fertilizes the woman; for nine months the child leads a vegetating life; then he is born, he leads an animal life, grows old, dies and is transferred to the world of matter. This one and complete Existence has no beginning and no end. Nothing has preceded it and nothing will follow it. It is both its own creator and its own creature. It is composed of numerous atoms, the interrelation of which is regulated by universal Laws.[5]

2. The world might owe its existence to a total complete Being, and all existing things are part of that whole. Hence this Being is the source of everything, from where everything starts and where everything ends. In fact, the whole and the parts are but

One Being, which manifests itself in various shapes and forms, following its own rules and regulations. In that case then, the existence of the parts is still determined by the same set of rules and regulations as in the first assumption. In both cases, neither the whole nor the parts have any choice. The whole is to the part what the self is to the self. There can be no difference between the part and the whole. It is like a human body with its different members: one cannot exist without the other. How, then, can a part worship a whole?[6] Ākhūndzāda then directly asks his reader:

> If really, according to what our religion claims, there is a Supreme Being, independent from the parts and free to choose; and if this Being is different and separate from you, how can you attribute to Him your own attributes?[7]

And he sternly admonishes him:

> You have no right to describe this Being, since you know only those attributes which you observe in yourself... You have no right to ask Him any favor, or beg for His attention.[8]

Having thus attacked the religious conception of God, the author similarly condemns the religious notion of divine justice as conceived in the common belief in Heaven and Hell. He writes: let us suppose that the Creator has created me, allowing me one hundred years to live. No matter how much power, and no matter how much wealth I possess, I would still not be free from experiencing all sorts of pains and sufferings. If, however, I spend those hundred years in sin, committing all kinds of crime, and I die, the Just Creator will of

course punish me. I accept the fact that, for those hundred years, He has me burned for 100, 200, 600, 900 or even one thousand years. Does the Creator have the right, in the name of Justice, to have me burn for longer than that? Can the worldly pleasure of a hundred years be equivalent to the sufferings of one day in Hell? Ākhūndzāda strongly challenges this notion of divine justice.

> We have to believe that the Creator is merciful and forgiving... Yet, a Creator who owns such a Hell, a Creator who is such a revenger, is the cruellest of all cruel beings... If He had to treat me this way, why did He create me at all? When did I ask life from Him?[9]

And he concludes that if such a Hell exists, then God is an "unloving, hateful, cruel Being." If, on the other hand, there is no Hell, then why, he wonders, do the ulama deprive the people from the pleasures of this world; why do they frighten them, and thus prevent them from improving their way of life, and from following the path of progress together with other nations?[10] For, after all, man has to indulge, within reasonable limits, in the pleasures of this world such as dance, music, theater, all forbidden by Muslim laws. And he himself should set his own limits, since each human being is born with a natural ability to differentiate Good from Evil. Moreover, fear of Hell, and hope for Heaven cannot prevent crime.[11]

Ākhūndzāda also denies the existence of the soul, and therefore rejects the concept of an after-life. He defines soul as a quality,

kayfiyyat, of the body which is "put together" according to usual fixed rules. When the body dies, the soul stops living, too. It is a mechanical effect, just like the effect produced when two metals are put together in a certain way. The reason for it is Nature's secret.[12]

The author's denunciation of religious beliefs does not end here. He pursues the subject further by expressing his disbelief in the divine nature of the prophetic revelation, which he prefers to interpret in socio-anthropological terms. He states that religions and prophets have appeared in the world in times of ignorance, when men feared Nature. Now, the modern world offers Science and knowledge to answer men's questions and to calm their fear. Since Science can explain everything, there is no need for a prophet.[13] What have the Arabs gained from Islam, he asks?

> Nowadays, there is no nation that is more ill-famed or more wretched than the Arabs. Why hasn't Islam been a cause of happiness to them? Barefoot and hungry, they are presently remaining apart, deprived of Science and art... Most probably, it is the tales of their Muslim creed that have kept the wretched ones away from the civilized nations.[14]

This does not mean, Ākhūndzāda hastens to admit, that other religions are better than Islam. On the contrary, Islam is the most acceptable of them all. And he openly declares: "I consider all religions to be meaningless and mythical."[15]

He deplores the fact that ever since the Arab conquest all kinds of religious sects have appeared in Iran, and people have shifted from one to the other: Hanafī, Shafa ī, Ismā ʿīli and, at present, Bābī. He wonders what is the relevance of a belief that is not founded on Reason and Philosophy.[16]

The author then emphatically claims that Islam could survive only when it is rationally understood; when its laws concerning people's rights are reformed and adapted to the needs of the nation; and when "one completely liberates oneself from the imposed servitudes of the so-called divine obligations."[17] He refers to the Protestant movement in Europe as a perfect example of a successful attempt to interpret religion rationally, and to eliminate erroneous, superstitious beliefs. In fact, he says, the Protestants are "though apparently (zāhiran) Christians inwardly, (bātinan) rationalists."[18] Hence, Ākhūndzāda here goes so far as to assert that rationalism and religion are not compatible. He approaches religion from a frankly pragmatic point of view. He clearly realizes that it could provide necessary social laws to establish order, yet he is impatient with its irrelevant aspects. He observes that no profitable result is ever gained from performing the "so-called divine obligations", such as pilgrimage. For travelling to Mecca is of no national interest.[19] Similarly, he considers the traditional Shī ʿī religious plays, taʿzīya,

to be only a nuisance, a fruitless legacy of the past, a symbol of cultural backwardness.[20]

The Azerbaijani's most vehement attack is directed towards the Shī'ī ulama and towards the Shaykhis, for their "obscure, abstract, meaningless theological debates which are useless spiritual exercises."[21]

One of Ākhūndzāda's main concerns was to promote the idea, and feeling, of nationalism among the people of Iran to whom he sought to attribute a separate identity from the rest of the Muslims. This search for a secular, cultural identity is quite well expressed in a letter he addressed, in 1866, to the editor of a Persian newspaper, Rūznāma-yi Makhī, who had chosen the mosque as a symbol for the nation of Iran. He explains his objection to the choice.

> To my opinion, this sign is irrelevant. If by nation (millat) you mean...the people of Iran, then the mosque does not exclusively belong to the Persians, for all Muslims possess mosques. The symbol of the Iranian nation consists of: before Islam, the ancient Persian monuments such as Persepolis;...and after Islam, one of the most famous monuments of the Safavid kings who have established in Iran the Twelver Shī'ī sect, who have organized all its various tribes into one nation, and who are responsible for giving to Iran a separate, independent sovereignty.[22]

He then counsels the editor "for the sake of Iran's national feeling to find a symbol that, on the one hand, is indicative of the time of the

ancient Persian monarchs; and on the other hand, recalls the Safavid Shahs."[23]

Here we notice that Ākhūndzāda had by no means the intention to reject Iran's Muslim legacy as did Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī who sought his nation's identity exclusively in its Zoroastrian past. Actually, Ākhūndzāda wished to see Islam eliminated because he thought it was incompatible with (1) nationalism; (2) modern science and technology. Unlike Kirmānī, he bore no hatred towards the Arabs who conquered Iran and destroyed Zoroastrianism. Thus, instead of wasting his energy in looking back to the past with nostalgia, he mainly looked forward to a bright future which he knew could be achieved only through the study of Sciences, the establishment of modern technology, and the rule of a liberal constitutional government.

> One cannot acquire science unless it is accompanied by progress. Progress cannot be envisioned without liberalism. Liberalism is possible only when one gets rid of superfluous beliefs.[24]

The author was aware of the fact that liberalism and "political know-how" could be learned only in Europe, since the Persian despotic rulers, "who arrogantly believe in their superiority over the rest of the world, have no knowledge of the science of government and politics."[25] He also knew that, in order to study European sciences freely, the power of the ulama, who forbade on religious grounds the people from mixing with non-believers, had to be curbed. He

therefore cleverly appealed to the Shah to cooperate in the struggle against the religious leaders and their fanaticism; to liberalize his rule and to promote education. He states:

> History has shown that as long as ignorance and superstition reign among a population, no despotic rule can last long. For the credulity of the people makes it very easy for any religious impostor to appeal to the masses, come to power and depose the despot... Hence the durability of a dynasty depends on education and on national liberation from erroneous beliefs.[26]

It is therefore vital, Ākhūndzāda writes, to the Shah's own sovereignty to establish a parliament and a code of Law, and to consider himself to be "the nation's representative". People would then love him and would not allow anyone to oppose him, since his existence provides them with security, justice and happiness. They will be patriotic and obedient. Their obedience, however, would not be incited by fear but by love and trust.[27]

Ākhūndzāda also suggests that the secular government should take over the task of education from the ulama, and enforce the necessary reforms to spread literacy. The first step to be undertaken in this direction should be the reform of the alphabet. Being very conscious of the ulama's power and influence, and wishing to protect himself against the latter's possible accusation of heresy, at first he attempted to propose a revised script that would not be too obviously different from the old Arabic one. He was thus very

cautious in his meeting with officials of the Ottoman Scientific Society, in 1863.

> I said, to use separate letters from the old alphabet is entirely contrary to Islam. Without doubt the people would be horrified at separate letters. It is impossible to write the Koran in separate letters... But in my new alphabet, there occurs not a single form or shape entirely different from the old letters.[28]

In spite of the fact that this first attempt failed, Ākhūndzāda, together with Malkam Khan whom he met in Istanbul, continued to campaign for the adoption of his alphabet reform by both the Ottoman and Persian governments. He never succeeded though, and this embittered him. "He conceived of all opposition to his plans as inspired exclusively by blind ignorance and the vested interests of fanatics."[29] In 1868, he wrote in a letter sent from Tiflis to the Minister of Sciences in Tehran:

> Though my contemporaries, for some reasons which I cannot understand, are opposing the change of the old script, I am nevertheless certain that, once this present generation has disappeared, the following generation, that is, our successors, will find out that the change of alphabet is a necessity, and they will bring it about.[30]

The alphabet was never changed in Iran, and Ākhūndzāda's influence upon major Persian political events was marginal. Unlike Malkam and Afghānī, who were, to a certain extent, direct contributors to the Persian revolutionary movement, his own contribution was insignificant. His importance lies in the fact that he was (1) the

precursor of a definite secular trend which was going to characterize the national movement as it developed in the twentieth century; (2) the model that Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī tried to copy. In fact, one of Kirmānī's most important works, Sad Khitāba, is a sequence to Ākhūndzāda's Sa Maktūb.[31]

Conclusion

The three thinkers we have briefly introduced in this chapter shared in common (1) a feeling of humiliation due to European domination; (2) a call for a strong government to hold the nation together in the struggle for national reconstruction; (3) a reforming plan which, in spite of their anti-Western political orientation, was based on a thoroughgoing Westernization. Whereas Afghānī's nationalism was more traditionally oriented, and Malkam's more radically Westernizing, Ākhūndzāda's was by far the most revolutionary. For, while the first two reformers still recognized the need for religion to serve both as a strong moralizing bond to keep society cohesive and as a means to gain the support of the religious element in their struggle against the existing political regime; the Azerbaijani dared openly to reject Islam as a basis for a modern nation, and promoted the concept of secularism as the necessary way to achieve rapidly and efficiently a political and cultural renaissance. By condemning religion, he also had to condemn the existing social values and mores of his country.

Busy as they were tackling the problems of foreign intervention and of domestic government corruption, none of them was able to grasp the fact that those ideas and attitudes they wished to introduce were not isolated items but part of an organic whole which constitutes

a culture. Similarly, they failed to realize, not only that it is scarcely possible for a whole people to adopt globally a foreign system of thought; but also, if they did, they could not escape a dramatic cultural clash which would result in the rapid dislocation of the traditional culture.

We shall see in the course of our present study that Kirmānī's nationalism would adopt an even more radical tone than Ākhūndzāda's. Having borrowed essentially (1) from Afghānī the traditional Muslim philosophical notion that Prophecy and religion are useful tools needed to civilize primitive peoples whereas philosophy is for those who reached a higher intellectual stage; (2) from Malkam his notion of the European system of government; (3) from Ākhūndzāda his anti-Islamic revolutionary nationalism; Mīrzā Āqā Khān adds to them his own peculiar, passionate vision of an Iran which has been mutilated and is in desperate need of rescuers. It is the vision of an angry man who is both a poet and a moralist.

Footnotes

Afghani

1. Nikki R. Keddie in Islamic Response to Imperialism, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969, definitely proves his Persian Shi'i origin. Homa Pakdaman in Djamal-ed-Din Assad Abadi dit Afghani, Paris, 1969; and Sadr Vasīqī, Sayyid Jamāl ud-Dīn Husayn, also come up with similar convincing materials concerning his birthplace. I have gathered most of my information regarding his biography from these three souces.

2. Islamic Response... p. 12.

3. Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, Oxford, 1962, p. 110.

4. Arabic title. The Persian title is The Truth about the Neicheri sect and an Explanation of the Neicheris. The Neicheris were the pro-West followers of Ahmad Khān. The word meant "naturalists." Islamic Response, p. 21.

5. see Ibid, pp. 84-95, for the analysis of the ideas expressed in Answer to Renan.

6. see N. R. Keddie, Religion and Rebellion..., pp. 46-49.

7. For the most important letter in which he denounces the Persian monarch, and in which he urges the chief Mujtahid to take action against the concession see Ibid, pp. 69-73.

8. Islamic Response... p. 29

9. H. A. R. Gibb, Modern Trends in Islam, Chicago, 1947, p. 28.

10. S. Vasīqī, Sayyid Jamāl ud-Dīn Husayn: Pāyaguzār-i Nuhzathā-yi Islāmī, Tehran, 1348.

11. E. Kedourie, Afghānī and Abduh, London, 1966.

12. "Religion and Irreligion...," and Islamic Response...

13. Afghānī and Abduh, p. 45.

14. Islamic Response..., p. 71.

15. Afghānī and Abduh, p. 47.

16. Islamic Response..., p. 53.

17. quoted in Ibid., p. 63.

18. Afghānī and Abduh, p. 63.

19. Fazlur Rahman, Islam, Chicago, 1966, p. 69.

20. Even to the extent of begging the British, whom he had so viciously attacked in his speeches and writings and whom he considered to be the Muslims' archenemy, to help him get out of Istanbul where he felt trapped by Abul Hamid. He refers to them as the saviours of mankind, the spreaders of civilization, the protectors of Christians as well as of Muslims against tyranny. "Des milliers de Mussulmans et Chrétiens exclament du fond de leur coeur: Sauvez-nous, sauvez-nous." Letter to Sir Philip Currie, written in Istanbul on December 12, 1895, at the time when Afghānī must have lost all hope for successfully achieving any of his political projects. He probably saw it to his advantage to appeal to the European Big Power for support and protection against Muslim rulers. The letter is quoted in Afghānī and Abduh, p. 88.

21. Islamic Response..., p. 33.

22. Ibid., p. 46.

23. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

24. Islamic Response..., p. 123.

25. Ibid., p. 97.

26. Ibid., p. 97.

Malkam Khān

1. see Muhīt Tabātabā'ī, Majmū'a-yi āthār-i Mīrzā Malkam Khān, Tehran, 1327, Introduction.
see also Ibrāhīm Safā'ī, Rahbarān-i mashrūta, Tehran, 1344, pp. 41-63.
Hāshim Rabī'zāda, Kulliyāt-i Malkam Khān, Tehran, 1325, Introduction.
Bricteux, Les comédies de Malcom Khan, Paris, 1933, Introduction.

Nāzim ul Islām, Tārīkh-i bīdārī-yi Īrānīyān, pp. 149-153.

2. Majmūʿa-yi āthār...

3. Of all the sources we have consulted for Malkam's biography, only Browne declares not knowing the identity of the "Persian subject" responsible for the Lottery scandal. Persian Revolution, p. 31.

4. Malkam attempted to seek the Court's forgiveness to get back his position. See I. Safāʾī ed., Asnād-i sīyāsī dowrān-i qājārīya, Tehran, 1346, for his letters to Amīn us-Sultān admitting his guilt and asking forgiveness, pp. 301-302; and other letters praising the Shah and his Minister, pp. 291-238.

5. see Hamid Algar's forthcoming book on Malkam, and chapter 11 of his Religion and State in Iran.

6. "Essay on military organization" in Majmūʿa-yi āthār...,p. 103.

7. "Kitābcha-yi ghaybī", Ibid., p.8.

8. Letter to Mīrzā Husayn Khān dated 1294/1876, cited in F. Adamiyat, Fikr-i Āzādī, p. 115.

9. loc.cit.

10. "On military organization", Ibid., p. 99.

11. "Kitābcha-yi Ghaybī", Ibid., p. 13.

12. Cited in Fikr-i Āzādī, p. 126.

13. "Īrān nazm nadārad", Majmūʿa-yi āthār..., p. 95.

14. "Kitābcha-yi Ghaybī", Ibid., p. 13.

15. "On military organization", Ibid., p. 101.

16. "Rafīq va vazīr", Ibid., p. 67; "Daftar-i qānūn", Ibid., p. 121.

17. "On military organization", Ibid., p. 107.

18. "Kitābcha-yi Ghaybī", Ibid., p. 14; "Daftar-i qānūn", Ibid., p. 126.

19. "Kitābcha-yi Ghaybī", p. 15-16.

20. "On military organization", pp. 112-114.

21. Ibid., p. 109; "Kitābcha-yi ghaybī", pp. 40-46.

22. Ibid., pp. 10-13; "Daftar-i qānūn", pp. 134-144.

23. "Daftar-i qānūn", p. 159.

24. "Irān nazm nadārad", p. 86.

25. "Usūl-i taraqqī", Sukhan, pp. 481-83.

26. Ibid., p. 623.

27. "Rafīq va vazīr", p. 68.

28. Hamid Algar, "Malkum Khān, Akhūndzāda and the proposed reform of the Arabic alphabet", Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 5, no. 2, May 1969, p. 119.

29. Letter in Persian to the journal of the New Ottoman Society, August 1869, cited in Ibid., p. 121.

30. Ibid., p. 123.

31. For more detailed account of this, see Algar above mentioned article, and his forthcoming book on Malkam.

32. Qānūn, no. 2, March 22, 1890. see trans. in Browne's Persian Revolution, p. 37.

33. Qānūn, no. 4, May 20, 1890; and in Persian Revolution, p. 38.

34. Qānūn, no. 8, Sept. 18, 1890; and in Persian Revolution, p. 42.

35. Qānūn, no. 6, July 18, 1890; Persian Revolution, p. 41.

36. Majmū'a-yi āthār..., p. 179.

37. Ibid., p. 174.

38. Ibid., p. 178.

39. Ibid., p. 181.

40. Ibid., introduction; and Fikr-i āzādī, p. 201.

41. Fikr-i āzādī, p. 104.

42. Ibid., p. 216.

43. Ibid., p. 211.

44. Ibid., p. 212.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., pp. 208-209; Persian Revolution, p. 42; Majmūʿa-yi āthār..., Introduction; Les Comédies de Malcom, Introduction.

47. Tārīkh-i bīdārī-yi Irānīyān, vol. 1, p. 149.

48. Majmūʿa-yi āthār..., Introduction.

49. Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt, London, 1907. pp. 82-87.

50. Tārīkh-i bīdārī..., p. 149.

51. Majmūʿa-yi āthār..., Introduction.

Akhūndzāda

1. For a more detailed account of his life and thought, see F. Adamiyat, Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Fath-ʿAlī Akhūndzāda, Tehran, 1970.

2. There is a copy of the manuscript in the Melli library in Tehran.

3. Quoted at length in I. Afshar, Nathr-i fārsī-yi muʿasir, Tehran, 1330; in H. Algar, "Malkum Khan, Akhūndzāda and the proposed reform of the Arabic alphabet".

4. Quoted in "Malkum Khan, Akhūndzāda...", p. 122.

5. Sa Maktūb, pp. 117-121.

6. Ibid., pp. 125-130.

7. Ibid., p. 133.

8. Ibid., p. 134.

9. Ibid., p. 83.

10. Ibid., p. 84.

11. Ibid., p. 89.

12. Ibid., p. 159.

13. Ibid., p. 137.

14. Ibid., p. 31.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 142.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p. 143.

19. Ibid., p. 154.

20. Ibid., p. 167.

21. Ibid., p. 194.

22. quoted in Nathr-i fārsī..., p. 28.

23. Ibid.

24. Sa Maktūb, p. 61.

25. Ibid., p. 66.

26. Ibid., p. 71.

27. Ibid.

28. quoted in "Malkum Khān, Akhūndzāda...", p. 118.

29. Ibid.

30. quoted in Nathr-i fārsī..., p. 30.

31. Akhūndzāda seemed also to have greatly influenced Malkam. See Jan Rypka, History of Iranian literature, Dordrecht (Holland), 1968, footnote no. 14, p. 377.

3

MĪRZĀ ĀQĀ KHĀN KIRMĀNĪ: BIOGRAPHY

The history of Kirman city is one of the most eventful, most tumultuous, and most remarkable of all Persian cities. Its population included men of great religious and political commitment, courageous and self-sacrificing, learned and tolerant, as well as men of lesser caliber, religiously fanatical and politically passive and resigned to their fate. It has produced famed national leaders as well as cruel reactionary despots.

Before starting with Mīrzā Āqā Khān's biography, we should like to relate and describe the curious history of that city where the author was born and where he spent thirty out of forty-three years of his life, and which left a lasting emotional and intellectual impact upon him. A knowledge of the background can help us understand the man himself.

History of Kirman

There is a famous local verse which says: "On the face of the earth there is no place like Kirman; Kirman is the heart of the world, and we are men of heart", which reveals the Kirmanis' pride in and deep attachment to their home town.[1]

If we were to ask ourselves wherein lies the greatness of that "heart of the world", we would have a hard time finding it in its physical environment. Shiraz has its beautiful parks and water springs to be proud of. Isfahan can display its elegant monuments, legacy of the glorious Safavi period. Tehran can point to its majestic Damavand mountain and the snow-covered Alburz peak. Kirman, however, offers nothing but a barren and desolate landscape. The dry, rough climate and scarcity of water in that region accounts for the aridity of the soil, and the lack of vegetation. Often, strong gusts of wind blow the sands from neighboring dunes to the few cultivated lands and cover it with a thick layer of dust. The summer is long and hot, the winter is long and cold. The efficient qanats which were constructed at the time of the Sassanid rule have been, ever since the Arab conquest, often neglected by the governors. With the exception of a few local notables who took good care of it, the land was generally badly exploited by rapacious governors who appropriated large lots, absentee landlords and vaqf officials. People from other provinces and cities have also experienced similar mismanagement. Yet the utter poverty of the soil rendered the Kirmanis' hardships and insecurity much worse.[2]

The origin of Kirman city goes back to the time of the founder of the Sassanid dynasty, Ardeshir I (d. 240 A.D.) when it was built for

defense purposes. It rapidly became an urban center of some importance.

> During the preliminary stages artisans, well-diggers, architects and laborers were probably imported from the old capital city of Sirjan to construct qanats, wells, houses and defenses. In this way an urban society was transplanted from other centers of Sassanian power into the basin.[3]

With the advent of the Arabs and Islamization of Iran, Zoroastrianism remained alive among the population of Yazd and Kirman. As late as the nineth century, nearly two hundred years after the Arab conquest, the "Zoroastrian clergy had mounted retainers and controlled territory near Kirman city and Sirjan".[4] Although the bulk of the population in Kirman converted to Islam under the rule of Omar II (717-720) (his governor, Ghazban b. Qab sirix, was fiercely religious and had the Zoroastrian fire temples destroyed), many sects continued to flourish. The Kharajite movement gained temporary control of the provinces of Kirman and Fars. The city lost its importance until the tenth century when the Samanid governor moved his capital there to be away from the growing power of the Buyyid dynasty of Fars. Forty years later it was conquered by the latter, but it remained permanently the major cultural and administrative center of the province.

The province was subsequently ruled by Seljuqs, Mongols, Timurids. It grew and prospered again during the Safavid era (1502-1732), when the city became an important commercial center on the

route to India. The shawl and carpet weaving industry, for which it is so famous, being the finest produced all over Iran, was first established during the rule of Shah ʿAbbās the Great (1587-1629). At about the same time the British and the Dutch East India companies maintained factories to export raw wools and shawls. In the eighteenth century, however, the city suffered again in the hands of the Afghans and Nādir Shah, and during the struggle between the two Zand and Qajar tribes.

The Kirmanis' misery of the nineteenth century began with the deadly fight for power between Lutf ʿAlī Khān Zand, the heir to the short-lived dynasty that ruled the Southwestern part of Iran, and Āqā Muhammad Khān Qajar, the leader of the tribe that eventually succeeded in bringing the entire country under its command. Kirman citizens had chosen to remain loyal to Zand, and gave him asylum when he fled from Fars as the rival army was pushing victoriously southward. The city and the Zand leader, however, were captured after a long seige in 1794. We have numerous accounts, both Western and Persian, of the savage treatment Kirman was subjected to for three months after its fall. Sykes wrote:

> Kirman was treated with almost inconceivable cruelty. Not only were its women handed over to the soldiery, who were encouraged to rape and to murder, but the Kajar victor ordered that 20,000 pairs of eyes should be presented to him.... In order to commemorate the capture of Lutf Ali Khan

> in a suitable manner, Aqa Mohammed ordered 600 prisoners to be decapitated. Their skulls were then carried to Bam by 300 other prisoners, who were then killed, and a pyramid of skulls was erected on the spot where Lutf Ali Khan was taken.... Kirman has never recovered. Today (1893) it possesses more beggars and suffers greater poverty than perhaps any other city in Persia.[5]

Curzon's account is similar except for a slight difference in the number of eyes handed over to the victor. He explained:

> The city fell a victim to the fiendish rage of the conqueror, who for three months surrendered it to the passions of his soldiery, and is said not to have been satisfied until 35,000 pairs of eyes had been handed to him upon a dish, while every fine building was razed to the ground, and 30,000 women and children were carried off into slavery.[5a]

Vazīrī, the author of Tārīkh-i Kirmān, speaks of the great sufferings of the victims within the city. During the siege they were reduced to eating dogs, cats, sheepskins, seeds of dates. And he compares the cruelty of the Qajar invasion to the barbarism of Jenghis and Hulagu's massacres.[6]

We have chosen to quote at length from such accounts of Kirman's siege in order to explain the Kirmanis' subsequent hatred for the Qajars. The latter's oppression continued into the first half of the nineteenth century. Insecurity and decay were widespread. Provincial governorships were generally awarded to members of the ruling family, who exploited them as private domains. The Qajars usually appointed the harshest rulers to Kirman province as a

continued punishment for its earlier support of the Zand dynasty. Throughout the period, villages were abandoned, qanats fell into disrepair and population declined.

A fate similar to that of the unfortunate Zand prince befell Āqā Khān Mahalātī, leader of the Ismaili sect. In 1835-36, he was made governor of Kirman. A year later, however, he was removed from his position and pursued by the Qajar officials. Once more championing a lost cause, the Kirmanis helped him to hide and eventually to flee to Bombay, where most of his followers lived, and where he enjoyed British protection. The Qajar retaliation in the city, in its cruelty, matched the previous massacre.[7]

The population's poverty and despair reached at times such proportion that they were reduced to the odious practice of "live-taxes", māliyāt-i zinda. The Tehran official newspaper, dated 1272 A.H./ 1855 A.D., relates that some inhabitants of a small village in Kirman had captured a group of thirteen women and children whom they offered to the government as a substitute for their due taxes. The editor of Tārīkh-i Kirmān claims that such incidents had precedence.[8]

By 1850, conditions improved with the growth of Indo-Persian

trade, stimulated by the British, Indian (mostly Parsi), and native Zoroastrian merchants who controlled the commerce of the city (except for the carpet trade, which was in the hands of Tabrizi Turks). Carpet weaving was, of course, the greatest source of income. Kirman carpets were, together with shawls, in great demand in the West. They were marketed through the Istanbul market. In 1882, it was noted that there were several hundred carpet-weaving factories in and about Kirman city, the largest of which employed thirty weavers.[9]

It was also noted, however, that this so-called prosperity hardly ameliorated the condition of the poor. The weavers, for instance, never benefitted from the lucrative business which grew thanks to their own talented and dexterous work. Curzon remarked:

> The shawls are made from patterns, not painted, but learned by heart--a tremendous strain upon the memory--and are manufactured in surroundings extremely injurious both to eyesight and health. The looms are set up in filthy dark holes, without light or ventilation, where the artificers, who are men and boys, work in half-naked conditions.[10]

Browne was appalled by such misery.

> Their wages, as I learned, begin at ten tumans (about £3) a year, and increase gradually to twenty-four or twenty-five tumans (about £7.10s). In summer they work from sunrise to sunset and in winter they continue their work by candlelight till three hours after sunset... For food they get nothing as a rule but dry bread.[11]

We shall see later that Mīrzā Āqā Khān was seriously disturbed by such widespread poverty and the great socio-economic gap existing between the rich and the poor.

The population of Kirman city and its suburbs was estimated (in 1893) by Sykes at 50,000 divided according to the various religious sects as follows: Shi'is, 37,000; Sunnis, 70; Bahais, 3,000; Azali, 60; Shaykhis, 6,000; Sufis, 1,200; Jews, 70; Zoroastrians, 1,700; Hindus, 20.[12] Segregation according to occupational and religious quarters was prevalent. This factor created a collection of small communities within the larger whole. Of the two minority quarters, Jewish and Zoroastrian, it was the latter that suffered persecution. Whereas the Jewish quarter lay within the city itself, the Zoroastrian quarter lay outside those walls. The Zoroastrians

> were forced to wear somber clothing and were not permitted to wear stockings. They were not allowed to ride horses; if a Zoroastrian riding a donkey passed a Muslim townsman, he was forced to dismount. Zoroastrians could not wear glasses, and perhaps strangest of all, in the desert climate of Kirman, they could not carry umbrellas. They were forced to pay the hated jizya, or poll tax, and by law their houses had to be low enough so that a passing Muslim could touch the roof.[13]

They daily encountered discrimination and bias. Curzon relates the story of a wealthy Parsi who was murdered in the open streets at the instigation of the Mullahs, and whose murderers escaped "scot-free".[14]

Browne also describes the constant vexations and humiliations the Zoroastrians suffered at the hands of the fanatical Muslims.[15] In spite of that, they enjoyed self-government, their community being regulated by their own council of social and religious leaders. They possessed their own schools, a high priest and a secular head, four fire altars, and several Towers of Silence.

Many other Muslim sects have also suffered persecution, without, however, enjoying such a degree of autonomy. A great number of men were massacred by enraged fanatic mobs. One of the most famous victims was Mushtāq ʿAlī Shah, a prominent local Sufi master who was accused of heresy by the chief Mullah (he was accused amongst other charges, of singing the Koran accompanied by a sitar), and stoned to death in 1206 A.H./1791 A.D. Vazīrī reports that while dying, the learned man cried out loud:

> Blindfold me, for I am afraid of the Kirmanis' eyes.[16]

He was referring to the fanatic, savage look of his persecuters.

The history of Kirman is full of such episodes of fanaticism and bigotry. Perhaps more so than other provinces, it has been the scene for great religious activities, featuring orthodox Twelver Shiʿism, as well as other more "heretical" sects. Among the numerous holy sites found in that province, the most important ones are the

following:

a. The Shah Niʿmatullah Vālī shrine in Mahan, a town near Kirman city. Shah Niʿmatullah was a Sufi saint who had taken residence at Mahan in 1406, where he lived until his death in 1431. Mahan then became a pilgrimage center for mystics of the Middle East and India.

b. The Muʿalamdār shrine in Jupar is a place for pilgrims seeking miracles and blessings of saints, very similar to Qum and Mashhad.

c. Langar, a village between Jupar and Mahan, was a prominent center of the Shaykhi sect.

d. Abdullah ābād is a village where taʿzīya is performed each year.[17]

Kirman city itself enjoyed a lively intellectual milieu. There were many literary and philosophical circles that offered discussions and lectures on a variety of subjects. One of the most famous maktab (theological school) was founded by a great ʿālim, Āqā Sayyid Javād Imām Jumʿa (d. 1287/1871), whose reputation as an accomplished scholar of religious studies and Persian poetry had attracted leading Persian thinkers of the time. The philosopher Sabzvārī supposedly had spent some time in this school.[18]

It is remarkable that one province can offer such diversity of rites and beliefs to a population so religiously mixed. There is a place for the spiritually minded Sufis, for the more sophisticated, intellectual Shaykhis, for the pious Twelver Shi ites, and for the general public more attracted by the "populist" type of religious festivity such as the ta'zīya. Despite the ulama's constant threat of persecution, Sufism, Shaykhism, Babism and "heresies" of all kinds, flourished. In 1887-88, after two months spent in Kirman city where he met people "...of every grade of society and every shade of piety and impiety...almost of every rank, from the prince-governor down to the mendicant dervish--Baluchis, Hindoos, Zoroastrians, Shi'ites, Sunnis, Shaykhis, Sufis, Babis, both Bahai and Ezeli,dervishes...", Browne summarizes his general impression:

> I found myself ere long in a world whereof I had never dreamed and wherein my spirit was subjected to such alternations of admiration, disgust and wonder, as I had never before experienced in my life.[19]

He mentions that the literary conversations he had with his learned acquaintances were all about religion, God, metaphysics. It is interesting to observe here that the Kirmanis, just like Persians in general at that time, very often manifested in religious terms their need for change, for intellectual and spiritual speculation, for moral commitment, and for social entertainment. Browne, again, reports an amusing incident which is to a certain degree revealing. He used to spend many evenings with people who would be "smoking opium and

weaving metaphysics", reciting poems and playing musical instruments. One night he encountered a man who, while in a state of high intoxication, cried again and again, "I am Moses, I am Jesus, I am Muhammad! What say you to said!"[20] To the Englishman such nonsensical utterances sounded blasphemous. We are more inclined to remark only the fact that even in a state of high intoxication, the man's mind still was leaning towards religion.

Kirman city turned out to be a fertile ground for more politically oriented revolutionary thought. Judging from Sykes' above-mentioned chart, the Kirmanis had already proven to be receptive to new challenging ideas. Among a population of 50,000 the number of 3,000 Bahais, 60 Azalis, and 6,000 Shaykhis is relatively high. One can therefore understand how the national movement had no problem recruiting zealous converts to its cause. We know that copies of Akhtar, the revolutionary newspaper published in Istanbul and to which Mīrzā Āqā Khān contributed many articles, were found circulating secretly from home to home.[21] We also know that some of the prominent revolutionary men of the period were Kirmani by origin. Apart from Mīrzā Āqā Khān himself and Skaykh Ahmad Rūhī, there were, to name only a few, Mīrzā Rizā, who assassinated Nāsir ud-Dīn Shash; Nāzim ul Islām, author of the first history book of the Persian national awakening (Tārīkh-i Bīdārī-yi Irānīyān); Majd ul Islām

Kirmānī (1871-1923), a student of the latter and author and publisher of various patriotic newspapers, active member of Tehran's constitutional group in the 1900s.[22]

Such was Mīrzā Āqā Khān's birthplace: a land of great poverty and yet of rare craftsmanship; a society that mercilessly crushed religious heresies and yet allowed mysticism, Shaykhism, and Babism to develop; a people capable of chivalrous and heroic loyalty to their partisans as well as of passive resignation to the cruelty of their oppressors; a city that proudly traces its origin back to pre-Islamic Sassanian time.

Mīrzā Āqā Khān's Biography

Abdul Husayn Khān, later known as Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, was born in Mashiz, a small village just over 87 km west of Kirman city, in 1270 A.H./1853-54 A.D. Both his parents were descendants of illustrious families who could draw their genealogy way back in history. On the paternal side he was: son of Abdul Rahīm Mashīzī, a wealthy landowner, affiliated with the Sufi sect Ahl-i Haq; grandson of a close companion of Āqā Khān Mahalātī, the Isma'ili leader who was once governor of the province but was forced to leave for Bombay; great grandson of a prominent Zoroastrian leader who had converted to Islam. On the maternal side, he was: the grandson of Mīrzā Kāzim

Khān, a distinguished physician of Kirmān; great grandson of Mīrzā Muhammad Taqī Khān known as Muzaffar ʿAlī Shah, a famous jurist who was a disciple of the Sufi master Mushtāq ʿAlī Shah, the learned head of a Sufi order, before dying at the hands of a similar vengeful mass of fanatics; a direct descendant of an aristocratic physician from Mogul India, who was offered an official position in the Safavid court, had settled in Iran and married a royal Persian princess.[23]

Mīrzā Āqā Khān could therefore boast of possessing a peculiarly mixed ancestry that included Sufis, Ismailis, Zoroastrians, physicians, jurists, and royalty. In the course of our present study we shall see that consciously or unconsciously, he combined many of the various, often conflicting, traditional traits he had inherited from his forefathers: a philosophical mind that tended to mysticism and free-thinking; an interest in law and jurisprudence; a veneration for science and rational knowledge; a great respect for Zoroaster and a deep emotional attachment to pre-Islamic Iran; and, above all, the aristocratic pride of a well-born Persian who holds Arab culture in contempt. He also developed an intense historical consciousness that may or may not have been an obvious result of his own family's long historical background.

His formal education was, in the beginning, typical Persian.

Before undertaking the study of philosophy proper, he had first to acquire thorough knowledge of Persian and Arabic languages and literatures, grammar, rhetoric, logic, mathematics, elements of jurisprudence, theology. Then he went to a well established teacher with whom he ventured into the hazardous path of metaphysics and philosophy, a study traditionally considered to be the highest intellectual training, and the crown and summit of all knowledge. His teachers were: Āqā Sādiq, a pupil of Mullah Hādī Sabzvārī, and Hājjī Sayyid Javād Shīrāzī Kerbalā'ī who essentially taught him the philosophies of Mullah Sadrā; Shaykh Ahmad Ahsā'ī and the Bab.[24] Sayyid Javād himself was a noted Babi thinker who became, for a long while at least, Mīrzā Āqā Khān's chief inspirer and model of perfection to follow. The latter had actually claimed that his learned master was the real author of the ideas contained in one of his most important Babi works, Hasht Bihisht. In another of his essays, entitled Qahva Khāna-yi Sūrat, he had protrayed him as the ideal man, the humanist with great intellect and religious tolerance.

Mīrzā Āqā Khān also studied elementary French and English with a Zoroastrian teacher called Mīrzā Iflātūn, and he acquired a basic knowledge of ancient Persian languages, Avestan and Pahlavi. We can safely assume, however, that the education he got while in Kirman was within the general framework of the Persian Islamic tradition,

to which he added a knowledge of classical Greek philosophy and of current Babi thought. It proved to be a solid background to start with. It was said about him, shortly after he left his native province,

> There was no subject which Mīrzā Āqā Khān did not know about... He knew by heart the philosophy of Aristotle...and Greek thought in general.... Mīrzā Āqā Khān could explain the Koran as if he were a prophet or had gotten his information from the Commander of the Faithful himself. He had a vast knowledge of the Sunna and hadith, be it Sunni, Shafa'i or Hanafi...He could carry a learned conversation on various Shī'ī sects and Babism, and on their different conflicting views.[25]

We shall observe later that, once he got acquainted with modern European political and philosophical thought which opened up new perspectives as yet unknown to him, Mīrzā Āqā Khān decided to reject all knowledge he had previously acquired as "nonsensical", and "too poor a meal" for a starving mind.

From his earliest years, Mīrzā Āqā Khān revealed himself to be intelligent, keenly interested in people and ideas of all sorts, and quick to learn. He devoted practically all the time spent in Kirman in leisurely studying, reading and writing, not being forced to earn his daily bread, since he lived off his family estate. His closest friend and companion was a classmate of his whom he knew since early childhood, and with whom he developed a relationship that was going to last till they both met their death, the same day, in the hands of the same executioner. In Shaykh Ahmad Rūhī, his senior by seven

years, he found not only comradeship, but also a kindred soul. They both had in common a kind of restless intellectual curiosity that characterized their endless quest for novel ideas, and a constant urgent need to write. Both friends collaborated closely together during their formative student years in exploring the intricate realm of philosophy, later in their conversion to Babism, and during their most creative period as authors and journalists. To this spiritual bond, they soon added a family alliance by marrying two daughters of Subh-i Azal.

Of the two, Mīrzā Āqā Khān seems to have possessed the more striking personality. Though reserved and more inclined to silence while in company, he was endowed with a fierce eloquence of speech, and a quick, often violent, temper. Once angered, which he frequently was, he would make no attempt at being polite by hiding his true feelings.[26] This caused him many troubles and many enemies, some of whom proved to be dangerous to his personal safety. Immensely proud and bearing grudges for long, his anger usually ended in bitterness and hatred. This angry nature, together with his characteristic spiritual restlessness, are two key factors that help us understand his life and works.

In 1880-81, the new governor of Kirman, Nāsir ud-Daula

Farmān-Farmā, offered him a position in his cabinet as Kirman city's tax collector. The young writer apparently accepted it rather reluctantly, for it was a difficult task that had already discouraged many of his predecessors, and for which he certainly was not qualified. He therefore personally hired the assistance of three finance experts to carry on this tedious job for him. A couple of years later one thousand tumans were found missing from the total sum due to the provincial treasury. The governor and his deputy, Mīrzā Sayyid Kāzim Vakīl ud-Daula, accused Mīrzā Āqā Khān of mishandling the state fund. The latter's protest that the blame should be put on the three hired men was of no avail. A heated argument between him and Vakīl ud-Daula followed, which ended with insults and threats from both sides. Life in Kirman was no longer bearable for the angry young man who pleaded innocent in vain. One dark night in 1883, leaving everything he possessed behind him, except for the clothes he was wearing and the horse he was riding, he stealthily left Kirman. He was never to return to his birthplace again.[27] This self-imposed exile seems to have marked him deeply. The injustice he suffered in the hands of the Qajar governor engendered an everlasting hatred for the latter. Moreover, Nāsir ud-Daula's attempt to capture him from wherever he was, to his last day, constantly added fuel to his strong feeling.

Kirmānī was then just over 30 years of age. He headed towards Isfahan where he temporarily settled. He soon came to frequent a literary circle which at that time used to meet regularly for lectures and debates. During these sessions "new and progressive" ideas were introduced and discussed by learned members of the society, ideas which were not always pleasing to the religious authorities. For we know that one of the circle's habitués, a certain Shaykh Muhammad Manshadī Yazdī, "an enlightened man", was soon accused of heresy.[28] It took Mīrzā Āqā Khān no time to secure for himself a solid reputation as a talented and cultivated orator. This reputation soon reached Zill us-Sultān, governor of Isfahan, who gave him a position in his ministry, which, however, was later taken away from him when the governor received a letter from Nāsir ud-Daula accusing him of dishonesty. In 1885, together with his friend Rūhī, who had just come from Kirman, he went to Tehran.

In the capital they both mixed with royalty and aristocrats, and even gave private lessons to some of their sons. Mīrzā Āqā Khān took this opportunity to report the governor of Kirman's injustice to the government officials. In the meantime, however, Nāsir ud-Daula had requested Amīn us-Sultān, the then prime minister, to extradite him to Kirman. Amīn us-Sultān refused and, instead, advised the young man to leave Tehran quietly. Thus the two friends, chased

away from Tehran a few months after their arrival, departed for Istanbul which they reached in 1886. On their way they stopped in Mashhad, Rasht, and Tabriz. Except for a short trip that took them during that year to Cyprus where they met Subh-i Azal and married his daughters, and to Syria and Iraq, then back to Istanbul, they spent the last ten years of their life in the Ottoman capital.[29]

These were ten industrious productive years during which Kirmānī wrote, read, studied, and, essentially, formulated revolutionary ideas. It was during this period that he became more acquainted with Western thought, and began to be considerably influenced by it. He greatly improved his French, which he had studied first in Kirman, and later in Isfahan with some Jesuit monks. He also studied English and Turkish. He himself evaluated his knowledge of foreign languages the following way:

> I know Persian and Arabic grammar and literature to perfection. I know enough Turkish to be able to translate. I can express myself in French and I am busy studying English.[30]

It is impossible to gather what European books exactly he read. We can list with certainty Fénelon's Télémaque and Bernardin de Saint Pierre's Le Café de Surat, since he translated both into Persian. We can also guess,from the ideas exposed in his works, that he extensively read Descartes, Rousseau, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Spencer, and Darwin. He likewise displays a knowledge of eighteenth and early

nineteenth centuries' socialist and utopian movements. He makes several references to such terms as anarchism, nihilism,... without, however, providing any serious definition, a fact that may indicate his shallow understanding of the movements. On several occasions he mentions, but not by name, "European scientists" who established the theory of racial inequality as a fact. He was acquainted with contemporary Ottoman liberal thought. He personally knew the French orientalist C. Huart, who was then working as translator at the French Embassy, and who studied with him Islamic languages and culture.[31] And he kept a correspondence with E. G. Browne.

To a large extent we can agree with Adamiyat, who stated that during this period spent in Istanbul, Mīrzā Āqā Khān experienced quite an intellectual transformation.

> He quit imitating ancient thinkers and turned to Rousseau and Voltaire. He cut his bond to ancient philosophy and adopted materialism and naturalism. He got tired of seeking the spiritual unknown, and followed instead the religion of reason....In all fields of arts and sciences, he saw one purpose, social and human progress.[32]

That he genuinely searched for truth, desired to acquire knowledge through reason, and had a blind faith in science, there is no doubt. It is this natural disposition that made him so receptive to European ideas. Hence in the introduction to one of his works he wrote, in a way rather reminiscent of Descartes:

> My aim was to expose the truth of all matters... impartially...according to natural history and with the help of rational proof. In reaching my conclusions, I was subject to my personal appraisal. I was thus an interpreter not an imitator...I relied on the basic nature of things.... For I found out that the truth of matters cannot be known unless one discovers the chain that links them all together....I take pride in admitting that it is only after having heard diverse opinions, having mixed with different people, having read books and works of many authors, without preconception and never having let my mind loose; after I have walked on my own feet, looked with my own eyes, using my own mind, and enlightened by my own reason; and just as I had made it a rule not to take any one's side, having also made it a point not to clash with or spite anyone,....I wrote that work.[33]

He also emphasized the necessity of doubt, and praised "those who said that a person's first and foremost duty is to doubt his religion, to demand decisive proofs for it, and to go wherever those proofs lead him to".[34]

One must keep in mind though that while still in Iran he had already found, through Babism, a certain measure of freedom and means to escape from the stifling, old traditional system of values and beliefs. The greatest advantage of Babism over Western thought was, of course, the former's Persian origin. Similarly, of all the men that inspired him, the most important were three Iranians, though themselves admittedly influenced by the West: Malkam Khān, Sayyid Jamāl ud-Dīn Afghānī and Mīrzā Fath ʿAlī Akhūndzāda.

Kirmānī spent the first months in Istanbul in utter poverty and misery. He fell seriously ill for a while and had to go to the hospital for the poor. The letters he wrote to his relatives in Kirman remained unanswered. He soon found out that his mother and his brother had appropriated his own share of inheritance and refused to sent him any allowance. This dishonest deed on the part of his family, and the subsequent hostility that marked their relationship to him, left him more than ever disillusioned and embittered with his fellow countrymen. To the last years of his life he was to complain of his kin's ingratitude, infidelity and total lack of affection. In a letter addressed to a friend in Kirman and dated 26 Safar 1308/12 October 1890, he expresses his angry resentment.

> Man possesses three things: property, honour and life. These cruel relations of mine have wasted and taken away all three from me....They have stolen my property. They have spoiled my honour to the point that I may no longer live either in Kirman, which is my province and fatherland, or anywhere else in Iran....
>
> A few months ago I was seriously ill. An Ottoman lady, member of the Red Cross, took me to her house and nursed me for four months until I felt better. This kind lady had a son who died some years ago. From then on she spent all her time, money, and energy, taking care of strangers, prisoners, the sick and the orphans, in order to please her son's soul. Such a person deserves to be called mother unlike my own mother....I pray to God that no one gets such a mother or brother....
>
> All right then, I grant it to them that they are the best people and I am the worst; they should now leave me in peace. I shall suffer all hardships in this foreign land, and I shall keep my pains to myself (at least

> here no one knows me)...as long as they don't open my wounds, or set me afire...of course, death is a better lot . I swear to God, I have many times wished to kill myself, if only to set myself and themselves free...
>
> I now pretend that I am not a son of Kirman, and that I do not know them at all. They should likewise pretend that I am dead....However, they should have no great expectations, for I have requested someone to whom I entrusted my property, to donate it all to the orphans, poor and needy.[35]

In a letter addressed to his sister, the only member of his family whom he respected and cared for, he wrote the following paragraph to his mother:

> The greed for earthly possessions held you in such a grip, that you deprived me of your maternal attentions...while I have never failed to serve you with complete devotion, nor behaved towards you in any rude or inhuman manner....God knows, when I sometimes recall your cruelty and mercilessness, how I cry for a couple of hours. But then I turn to God, and I wish to the world happiness and to you a long life. However, if there is a God, if there is justice and if there is a future life, I shall not absolve futurity....If there is none, may you be happy, and may we also be happy.[36]

Instead of taking the necessary legal steps to get his rights back and coming to an agreement with his mother, Kirmani preferred to renew constantly his quarrel with her, and thus continued to assume the position of a victim. When we come to discuss his nationalist thought, we shall observe that he adopts the same tone of anger and bitter resentment, and the same voice of self-righteousness. His quarrels with his mother and his country had valid reasons. Nevertheless,

they were both prompted by a deep sense of alienation which he felt throughout his life. It can also be said that, on the other hand, these quarrels which he kept alive, served to maintain his intimacy with his country and relatives.

Shortly after he reached the Ottoman Empire, the governor of Kirman offered him peace and asked him to return to his native city. Vakīl ud-Daula even went so far as to write to him a personal letter full of "apparent affection and friendship". It is difficult to assess the sincerity of the governor's gesture. At any rate, Mīrzā Āqā Khān dismissed it as a cunning attempt to trap him, and wrote back a categorial refusal to accept the offer.[37]

He bore his self-imposed exile with a feeling of anguish and nostalgia for time past, mixed with a profound conviction that he had made the right decision, for he would have otherwise stagnated intellectually. At first the sense of satisfaction seemed to have dominated his homesickness. In Kitāb-i Rizvān, begun while still in Kirman and completed in Istanbul during his first year there, he proudly wrote:

> One evening as I was thinking of the unhappiness of my beloved fatherland, I contemplated with my experienced eyes the conditions of those wretched people deprived of light. And I felt sorry for those unfortunate creatures who, like the inhabitants of dark regions, have as yet seen nothing but the

obscurity of the night. They have all ended their life in darkness. I then thanked God, and considered myself lucky that, though I searched for a shield among saws and seas, and though I have prematurely aged, I saved myself from this dangerous abyss, and escaped such destruction.[38]

And he added the following poem addressed to the "unfortunate creatures" he left behind:

O Zephyr, if some day you pass by Kirman,
On my behalf tell those ignorant people:
If this is the life you have,
I would rather wander about mountains and deserts.[39]

During the last months spent in Ottoman territory, however, that is shortly before his death, he composed the following plaintive verse against destiny:

What have I done that the long wheel
threw me out of my land into exile?
Why should I have Rum as fatherland
a kingdom that is a prison to my soul?
O, happy was this time past
when I was joyful in Iran![40]

On the whole, Kirmānī's life in Istanbul proved to be often stormy and eventful. His relationship with the various people he knew there had its ups and downs. Frequently, a warm and what at first appeared to be a solid friendship ended in heated argument, for one reason or the other. Whether he was to be personally blamed for it or not, he seems to have been incapable of keeping a lasting, steadily harmonious atmosphere between him and his fellow colleagues or acquaintances, with the exception of Rūhī, of course! When he first arrived in the Ottoman capital, he established a "cordial entente" with the then Persian

ambassador, Mīrzā Muhsin Khān Mu'īn ud-Daula, later known as Mushīr ud-Daula. The latter was known to be an "enlightened liberal" diplomat who had encouraged, and financially helped, a Tabrizi to found Akhtar, a Persian newspaper, in 1875. He appreciated Mīrzā Āqā Khān as a learned, intelligent man with whom he enjoyed discussing various subjects. Their relations, however, soon cooled off, and subsequently Mīrzā Āqā Khān never missed an opportunity to attack him.[41]

Kirmānī mixed socially with a group of Persian expatriates, merchants, teachers, writers, and poets. His association with the newspaper Akhtar--which "was always in each period of its history the lamp of all assemblies of cultivated men and the center around which rallied the most accomplished and enlightened of the Persian exiles, and was maintained by the literary cooperation of patriotic scholars" until it was abolished by the Ottoman government in 1895--gave him the opportunity to enlarge his circle of friends and acquaintances.[42] With one of them, Mīrzā Habībullah Isfahānī, he became closely acquainted and, together with Rūhī, collaborated in translating various French, English and Turkish books into Persian and Arabic. The most successful translation they undertook was The Adventures of Hajji Baba.[43]

He earned a decent living by writing articles for Akhtar, for which he received a monthly salary of 12 liras; teaching five days a week in a Persian school for 8 liras a month; and giving private lessons of Persian and Arabic languages to Persian, Ottoman, and European individuals.[44] Among his students there were prominent men like Riza Pasha, Ottoman Minister of Finances; Khalil Adham, Director of the Humayuni Museum; C. Huart, French historian and orientalist.[45] By 1893, he could write to his friend in Kirman:

> For a long time in this place of exile, I have... been unable to earn my daily bread...with God's grace, I am now famous and well known in Istanbul, Tabriz and Tehran, and able to work. I now move in this state respected and with complete freedom. And I possess in the bank the sum of 750 liras.[46]

It was a modest sum compared to the family fortune he was entitled to. Yet apparently he was quite satisfied and in no need of much more, as long as he could eat and had a roof over his head. He obviously gave money little importance, writing being his greatest concern.

The newspaper Akhtar, which had begun its career with the Persian government's blessings, was soon banned in Iran, yet managed to circulate clandestinely. The Shah, who used to read it regularly, had come to dislike thoroughly the progressive ideas it contained, and he found Kirmānī's articles especially distasteful. It was reported that the Persian monarch on hearing the latter's

name mentioned, would angrily beat the floor with his cane, and his lips would tremble.[47] Kirmānī's contribution to the newspaper, however, lasted only a few years. For, shortly before or during the year 1892, he quit working there because of a clash with the editor whom he accused of dishonesty, and a violent quarrel with the publisher's son-in-law, Mīrzā Husayn Sharīf. As a result of this quarrel, Mīrzā Husayn assembled a larger gathering of Persians in his home and denounced Kirmānī as "an enemy of religion, government and nation, and he should be stoned".[48]

Revolutionary Activities

Aside from his writings, Kirmānī's political action in Istanbul was twofold. On the one hand he helped Malkam Khān to establish an "Adamiyat lodge" in Istanbul, and in distributing the newspaper Qānūn among Persian readers; and on the other hand, he collaborated with Jamāl ud-Dīn Afghānī in setting up a pan-Islamic movement, chiefly among Shīʿīs. Hence, while his activities with the former were, broadly speaking, "secular", with the latter he called for a pan-Muslim revolt against the Persian monarch. We shall see that, though Kirmānī, Malkam and Afghānī at times did join their united efforts for a common cause, sheer expediency motivated this collaboration. In fact, Kirmānī's political views were not entirely identical to the others. His relationship with Malkam Khān, who was then in London

after having broken his ties with Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah's court, was purely based on their correspondence which began in 1890, that is, about the time Malkam began to publish Qānūn, and ended in 1895 when Kirmānī was arrested. The two never met personally. Beginning in 1892 he knew Afghānī in person, and therefore had a more direct relationship with him.

From the start Kirmānī welcomed Malkam's newspaper with great enthusiasm. He himself had thought of establishing one on his own in Istanbul, yet he never succeeded in doing so, either for lack of funds, or because of the Persian government's severe censorship through its embassy and the Ottoman government's growing suspicion towards the local Persian press.[49] He saw in Qānūn a useful tool that would help "awaken the Iranian nation from its sleep of ignorance" and he advised Malkam to use thinner paper in order to facilitate its circulation everywhere.[50] He also offered assistance and service to propagate Malkam's so-called new humanitarian religion, "Adamiyat", among his countrymen, who he thought were in dire need of a new faith. Kirmānī stressed the fact that he was volunteering to sacrifice himself because his "heart was bleeding for the chaotic condition in Iran".[51] He compared this condition to that of dry tree leaves that are quickly burned yet as quickly extinguished. "The century-old, despotic, bloody rule of the Qajars" had corrupted the people's

"humanist soul". Hence, individuals, instead of setting their ultimate goal towards the establishment of eternal happiness among the human race, in general had turned their attention to "achieving fast, easy but short-ranged personal profits".[52]

Kirmānī was aware of the fact that a lot had to be done, great obstacles surmounted before one could "open the Iranians' eyes and ears". Yet he was convinced that, once opened, they would cooperate.[53] He assured Malkam that he was willing to take any risk and to do what he could for this "sacred hope". He feared nothing and no one.[54] He thus worked to establish the Adamiyat lodge in Istanbul, which by 1894 had twelve members.[55] Mīrzā Āqā Khān had many plans for enlarging his activities in this domain. He wanted to go to Europe to meet Malkam and other "brothers", then to Iran where he had heard the time was ripe for their message, and "there were many individuals ready to follow".[56] In a letter to his friend in Kirman, dated a year later, he communicated the same intention to come to Iran on the way back from his trip to Europe. However, he naturally did not mention his political activities and instead spoke of his determination to confront those who had done him wrong and take his revenge.[57]

Mīrzā Āqā Khān believed that one could cure Iran's ills only by

"striking at the root" itself.[58] Unlike Malkam he had no faith in the Qajars or in the ulama. He wrote to Malkam that, in order to establish the necessary reforms, one must

> inwardly forget about this Qajar tribe and the stupid Mullahs....All their deeds are based on self-interest and nothing in them is trustworthy....Something must be done to bring into action the clean nature and pure blood of the nation's middle people, the peasants, dignitaries, and nobles.[59]

It is interesting to note here Kirmānī's attempt to think in terms of a "united front", that would include people from all classes, as a possible powerful opposition to the ruling government and religious authority. Perhaps he had in mind the early stages of the French Revolution when a strong alliance between the nobility, peasantry and bourgeoisie brought about the downfall of the Bourbon monarchy and the Catholic clergy. Most probably, however, he was thinking of the 1891-92 successful resistance to the tobacco concession organized and supported by members of the merchant and religious classes, though the target this time was to eliminate the power of the ulama.

Nevertheless, this antagonism and mistrust of the ulama did not prevent the young rebel from seeing their potential usefulness, once they fought on the right side. For he did not fail to appreciate their indispensable role in fomenting the spirit of revolt during the period of the Tobacco Affair. In a letter to Malkam in which he described the huge mass demonstration led by the Persians residing in Istanbul

in front of the embassy gate, and which succeeded in "frightening the ambassador" so much that he had to request a heavy police force to guard the building, an action that "disgraced him to the Ottomans' and Persians' eyes", Kirmānī highly praised the "united effort" of the Persians of all classes and professions. And he also admitted that this movement had greatly "enlivened" the ulama by arousing their feelings. He added that one should not miss that opportunity, and "as long as the ulama are still in a dancing mood", one must make use of it.[60]

Undoubtedly it is this consideration that motivated Kirmānī to join Afghānī's pan-Islamic movement. In 1892, the latter came from London to Istanbul at the Sultan's invitation. The two met shortly after his arrival. From the beginning, Mīrzā Āqā Khān was apparently doubtful as to the usefulness of the notorious agitator's presence in the Ottoman capital. He communicated his hesitations to Malkam.

> The Shaykh's presence in Istanbul, in spite of its purpose to promote "Adamiyat" and crush worms, is offensive. Soon, everybody's nose would be muddied.[61]

In other words, Kirmānī feared some evil consequences of Afghānī's stay in Istanbul. Strangely enough for a man who upheld proud, uncompromising principles, he was counselling him to be more cautiously "diplomatic" with the political authorities. He wanted him to take the Sultan's advice, and offer his apologies to the Persian monarch via

his ambassador. Afghānī stubbornly refused to do so. Kirmānī was also critical of the latter's habitual entourage of "meaningless people and rascals". He seemed to have been more successful in this second attempt to influence him. For he wrote to Malkam:

> The Shaykh has become much wiser and more experienced. He no longer keeps the company of meaningless people and rascals.[62]

In spite of his first apprehension, Kirmānī closely collaborated with Afghānī in setting up a pan-Islamic circle which enjoyed the Sultan's blessings, and included scholars, writers, Sunnis, and Shīʿīs. Among the prominent members there were Shaykh ur-Raʾīs, a Qajar scholar and ʿālim; Mīrzā Hasan Khān, Consul General of the Persian Embassy; Shaykh Ahmad Rūhī and his brothers. They all cooperated in writing some 400 letters to the ulama all over the Muslim world asking them to join the pan-Islamic cause.[63] On Afghānī's behalf, Mīrzā Āqā Khān requested Malkam to devote a whole issue of Qānūn calling on the ulama of Najaf and Kerbala to "use their authority over fifty million Muslims" for the purpose of strengthening and uniting Islam.[64] Qānūn No. 20 printed such a petition, and it called for a fatwa anathematizing the oppressors as unbelievers--probably implying the deposition of the Shah.[65] The pan-Muslim society received some 200 enthusiastic replies which Afghānī showed to the Sultan. The latter was overjoyed with the ulama's response.

One of the letters was intercepted, however, by the Persian Consul in Baghdad, who immediately sent it to Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah, and reported Afghānī's conspiracy against the Persian throne. The Shah wired his ambassador in Istanbul the order to arrest all persons involved in the plot, and have them sent to Tehran. The ambassador's first attempt to fulfill the monarch's command failed, however.[66] At that time the revolutionaries were still backed by Ottoman high officials. The Persian government and its representatives in the Ottoman capital did not give up hope of achieving their end. Intrigues and secret agreements slowly prepared the way to it. Mīrzā Āqā Khān was told by a friend who was close to Amīn us-Sultān, the Persian Prime Minister, that the ambassador was busy discrediting him in the court, thus adding fuel to the Shah's anger.[67] In fact, the ambassador, Nāzim ud-Daula, and his brother, Alā' ul-Mulk, who later succeeded him in the position, already bore personal grudges against Kirmānī, Afghānī, and the ex-Consul General Mīrzā Hasan Khān Khabīr ul-Mulk. One of the latter's offenses was to have supposedly nicknamed Alā' ul-Mulk "Ulāgh ul-Mulk" (royal ass).[68]

Mīrzā Āqā Khān and Khabīr ul-Mulk thought of requesting political asylum from the Ottoman government. The political situation, however, prevented the Porte from granting it, for the latter had no intention of further displeasing the Shah's court.[69] Kirmānī was

beginning to despair. He wrote to Malkam:

> I shall stay here as long as I can. When I can no longer remain, I will escape and come to Europe.[70]

And he begged him to find a teaching position in Paris, Vienna or Berlin. Malkam promised assistance.[71] But it was getting too late. By 1895, Abdul Hamid's relations with Afghānī had already considerably cooled off. Furthermore, the 1894-95 Armenian revolt against the Ottoman rule provided an excellent opportunity for Kirmānī's enemies. Alā' ul-Mulk promised the Ottoman chief of police that if the latter arrests and hands him over Kirmānī, Rūhī and Khabīr ul-Mulk, he would in return arrest and hand over the Armenian refugees in Iran. An agreement was reached, and the three Persian friends were accused of helping the Armenians to rebel.[72] They were arrested and sent to Trebizond.

On hearing this news, Afghānī, although for the last six months he had not been on speaking terms with Mīrzā Āqā Khān and his companions, went immediately to plead their cause with the Sultan. Surprisingly enough, the Ottoman ruler claimed he had not been aware of the true identity of the banished individuals, and promised to set them free. Police authorities in Trebizond did receive the royal dispatch, for upon arrival, the prisoners were well treated and informed that they soon would be released.[73]

The Persian ambassador, highly displeased with the new order, wired the information to the Shah.

> His majesty the Sultan is again thinking of releasing Mīrzā Āqā Khān and his friends...and of returning them back to Istanbul....I have informed the ministry of foreign affairs that I can by no means accept this situation ...

And he urged his government to back him up by acting strongly and swiftly.

> Spreading the false rumor that our army will be sent to the frontier, and threatening the Ottoman embassy, should be enough.[74]

The Shah's response was quick. He instructed his ministers to protest to the Ottoman Ambassador in Tehran.

> Speak to the ambassador...and convey our surprise to see those two corrupt, sons of burned fathers, Persian subjects, whom Alā' ul-Mulk was instructed to send to Tehran,...returning to Istanbul....I seriously ask you to inform the Sultan that he should deport them to the Persian frontier, and not keep them on Ottoman soil. Otherwise, we shall break our friendly relations with the Sultan.[75]

In spite of the Shah's displeasure and threat the Porte was apparently still determined to release the prisoners.[76] However, Mīrzā Rizā Kirmānī's bullet that killed Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah was the decisive factor that determined Mīrzā Āqā Khān's fate. Since the assassin was associated with Afghānī, and since the latter's collaboration with the prisoners was well known, the Persian government found it convenient to charge them all with murder.

Rūhī's brother's last attempt to save them, by asking the Russian consul in Istanbul to intervene on their behalf, was of no avail. The Russian diplomat was told by the Ottoman officials, most probably repeating Alā' ul-Mulk's report, that the convicts were Babis and murderers, and hence as destructive as the Russian nihilists. They must die.[77]

They were handed over to the Persian border guards and brought to Tabriz secretly. They were kept secluded in a dark and damp cell in the basement of the governor's house. They were subjected to torture while being interrogated by the Crown Prince men.[78] The few accounts we have of their stay in prison unanimously praise the courage, self-confidence and dignity which characterized their conduct. One of the Tabriz government officials who visited them was reportedly greatly impressed by them.

> When I met them in the dark and damp prison of Tabriz, Mīrzā Āqā Khān's self confidence and strong convictions...Shaykh Ahmad Rūhī's faith and proud ideal...have left a tremendous impact upon me....As long as I live, I shall never forget this sad meeting.[79]

It is also reported that the two companions spent their time praying and reciting the Koran. Rūhī used to recite in "such a delightful, such a pleasant way" that people working in the building would come to listen to him, and to shed tears over their miserable situation.[80] They vehemently denied all charges made against them; and when the

Crown Prince accused them of heresy as Babi followers, Rūhī passionately replied: "You are lying, we are not Kāfir. We are true Muslims, proponents of the Muslim unity."[81]

With the exception of Adamiyat, the few Persian scholars who have written about Kirmānī drew the conclusion that, though he was a Babi for a while, he "reconverted" to Islam towards the end of his life.[82] I seriously doubt this. For to the last days spent in Trebizond, Kirmānī devoted his pen to the national revolutionary cause. His last two works written while in this Turkish frontier town, Salārnāma and Kitāb-i Rihān, respectively dealt with the glory of pre-Islamic Aryan Iran, and the deficiency of Persian Islamic culture. When transferred to Tabriz, with death getting closer, he might have felt a strong emotional need for religion, and spontaneously turned to the Koran for comfort.

On 6 Safar 1314/17 July 1896, at the command of the Crown Prince, Kirmānī and his companions were killed. Their stuffed heads were sent to the court in Tehran for exhibition, and their bodies secretly buried in Tabriz.[83]

List of Works

Before being a political activist, Mīrzā Āqā Khān was first and foremost a writer. He left a prolific amount of essays, newspaper articles, treatises, pamphlets, translations, epic poems, and most probably historical novels (most of them signed under a pseudonym). Only six of his works have been published after his death. Some of the rest are available in manuscript form, and others are not available at all. The following is a complete list of works attributed to him.

Kitāb-i Rizvān (Book of Paradise)

It is his first work, started at the age of 25 while still in Kirman, continued in Isfahan, and completed in Istanbul in 1304/1886-87, though later on he kept on adding material to it. Written in imitation of Sa'dī's Gulistān, it contains proverbs, sayings, anecdotes, poems, and biographical notes. There is a copy in the Cambridge library, E. G. Browne's collection.

Kitāb-i Rihān (Book of Wind)

His last work, written in Trebizond a few months before his death, not completed. It is essentially a critique of Persian literature in general, and a call for a new genre of littérature engagée.

Salārnāma

An epic in verse in imitation of Firdausi's Shahnāma, relating the history of pre-Islamic Persia. The last part contains an essay on literary criticism and a few patriotic poems. It was written and completed in Trebizond in 1895. A second volume was added to it, written by a former companion of his, Shaykh Ahmad Adīb Kirmānī, relating the history of Islamic Iran. Both volumes were published in 1937, the last part of volume one having been omitted. Nāzim ul-Islām had published this omitted part in his Tārīkh-i Bīdārī-yi Irānīyān.

Ā'īna-yi Iskandarī

Another history of pre-Islamic Iran, from the earliest time to the rise of Islam. First started in 1889, it was most probably finished two years later in 1891.[84] It was published in 1947.

Sa Maktūb and Sad Khitāba

Volume One and Two of a work in which the author, following nineteenth century European socio-anthropological as well as natural science theories, has attempted to study the history and society of Iran. It is in the form of letters written by a fictional prince Kamāl ud-Daula, a Persian living in India, to another fictional prince Jalāl ud-Daula of Persia. In spite of the titles, Volume One is in fact one

letter and Volume Two consists of 42 letters. Sa Maktūb follows quite closely Akhūndzāda's own book with the same title, with some major differences, though. We have been unable to determine the date of this work. E. G. Browne states that Sa Maktūb was written 1280/1863-64, but he is mistaking it for Akhūndzāda's work. At that time, Kirmānī was barely ten years old. We assume that he wrote it while he was in Istanbul, for the references to European scholars and writers, to their theories and to some European terminologies, reveal his fair knowledge of Western studies. It is a knowledge that he acquired essentially during his stay in the Ottoman capital. A manuscript copy of Volume Two is found in Browne's collection, Cambridge University library.

Tārīkh-i Shānzhemān -i Irān (History of changes in Iran)

A critical essay on the impact of historical events. Only 18 pages of it are available. It was most probably written in Trebizond, for at one section he refers to the time "when I was in Istanbul".[85]

Takvīn va Tashrī' (Book of genesis and holy law)

A philosophical essay, heavily influenced by Western natural scientists and empirical theories. It is not dated, but again we assume that it was written in Istanbul.

Qahva Khāna-yi Sūrat

A short essay, mostly based on a direct translation of Bernadin de Saint Pierre's Café de Surat, to which Kirmānī added some of his own ideas. It is a critique of the fanaticism and narrow-mindedness of all religions and sects. It was meant to be a preface for Hikmat-i Nazarī, published in Berlin, 1964.

Hikmat-i Nazarī

A Babi metaphysical treatise inspired by Western and Muslim philosophical and theological concepts, ancient, classical and modern. Not dated.

Hasht Bihisht

It is supposed to be the second volume to the preceding work, dealing with Babi practical concepts and ordinances. Both volumes were written in collaboration with Shaykh Ahmad Rūhī in Istanbul. Although the authors state in the introduction that both volumes attempt to expose and analyze Babi religious and philosophical concepts, they have in fact added ideas, inspired from Western modern secular thought. Though undated, we know it was written in Istanbul and finished sometime in 1892. Browne, in Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion, mentions the fact that he had just received a recently completed manuscript of Hasht Bihisht in that same year. Furthermore,

the last chapter of that book refers to Bahā'ullah's death "a few months ago" and to the subsequent rivalry between his successors. The Bahā'ī leader died in May 1892. It was printed in Tehran in 1958, but had to be circulated secretly.

Risāla-yi Inshā' Allah Mashā' Allah

A short pamphlet criticizing both Sunni and Shī'ī ulama for their fruitless and pedantic, scholarly endeavors. It was written in Istanbul in Rajab 1310/January 1893.

Translation of Fénelon's Télemaque

Not completed.

Articles for Akhtar

He contributed from the No. 37, fifteenth year to No. 11, sixteenth year. The title of his column was Dar Fan-i Guftan va nivishtan (On the Art of Speech and Writing).

Finally, there is a short list of works he has supposedly written but copies of which are not available.

A'īn-i Sukhanvan

A history of Persian literature, dated 1307/1889-90. He refers

to it in the introduction of Ā'īn-i Iskandarī.

Tārīkh-i Qājārīya va Sabab-i Taraqī va Tanazul-i Daulat va Millat-i Irān

History of the Qajars and on the reason for progress and decay of Iran. He mentions it in a letter to Malkam dated 1893.

Dar Takālīf-i Millat

On the responsibility and duties of the individual towards society. Same as above.

Risāla-yi Khūzistān

Mentioned in Hasht Bihisht. In this essay he advises Parsees from India to purchase the province of Khuzistan, to settle there permanently.

Lastly, Adamiyat in his book relates that Kirmānī could have possibly been the author of a few historical novels published in Bombay, in 1920, by Sanʿatī Zāda Kirmānī. The latter was the son of Mīrzā Āqā Khān's servant who, after his death, inherited his papers and went back to Kirman.[86] Our research did not take us this far. Mrs. Keddie, who has met Sanʿat Zāda, believes him to be the real author.

Footnotes

1. quoted in E. G. Browne, A year amongst the Persians, Cambridge, 1927, p. 475.

2. P. W. English, City and Village in Iran: Settlement and Economy in the Kirman basin, Milwaukee, 1966, chap. 1.

3. Ibid., p. 22.

4. Ibid., p. 24.

5. Sir Percy M. Sykes, A History of Persia, London, 1951, vol. 2, p. 288.

5a. G. N. Curzon, Persia and the Persian Question, London, 1892, vol. 2, p. 243.

6. Ahmad ʿAlī Khān Vazīrī, Tārīkh-i Kirmān yā Salārīyya, Tehran, n.d., pp. 362-367. see also Shaykh Yahyā Ahmad Kirmānī, Farmandahān-i Kirmān, ed. Bāstānī-Pārīzī, Tehran, n.d., pp. 4-9.

7. Tārīkh-i Kirmān, p. 392; Farmandahān-i Kirmān, pp. 27-30.

8. Ibid., introduction.

9. City and Village..., p. 28.

10. Persia and the Persian Question, p. 245.

11. A year amongst the Persians, p. 483.

12. Sykes, Ten Thousand Miles in Persia, New York, 1902, p. 195. These are Sykes' own terms. The Shaykhis and the Sufis were no sects, but different schools of thought within the Shi i sect itself.

13. City and Village..., p. 45.

14. Persia and the Persian Question, vol. 2, p. 241.

15. A year amongst the Persians, pp. 405-406.

16. Tārīkh-i Kirmān, p. 349. see also Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm, Saljūqiyān Va ghuz dar Kirmān, ed. Bāstānī-Pārīzī, Tehran, 1964, p. 46.

17. for more details, see City and Village..., p. 56.

18. Farmandahān-i Kirmān, p. 4.

19. A year amongst the Persians, p. 476.

20. Ibid., p. 573.

21. Ibid., p. 495.

22. Tārīkh-i Kirmān, pp. 345-346.

23. see the introduction to Hasht Bihisht.

24. Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm Sadr ud-Dīn, known as Mullah Sadrā, was a Persian Shī'ī theologian and philosopher of the Safavid period, responsible for restoring the teaching of Ibn Sina. He was especially interested in the questions of the prophecy, prophetic revelation, Imamate, and its role vis a vis the prophets. To escape the persecution of the Shī'ī ulama, he had to practice taqiya. He greatly influenced the Shaykhi school. see Mullah Sadra Shirazi, Le livre des pénétrations métaphysiques, ed. H. Corbin, Paris, 1964, introductory chapter pp. 1-20.

    Ahsā'ī, (d. 1826) was the founder of the Shaykhi school. see chapter 1 of this thesis.

    Mullah Hādī Sabzvārī (d. 1873) was one of the most important Shī i theologian and philosophers of the Qajar period. He was greatly influenced by Mullah Sadrā.

    Bab, see chapter 1 of this thesis.

25. This praise is attributed to Shaykh ur-Ra'īs, a Qajar liberal and learned prince whom Kirmānī first met in Mashhad, then later in Istanbul. Shaykh ur-Ra'īs was a follower of Afghānī's pan-Islamism. See Haftād ud-Dau Millat, Berlin, 1343/1964, p. 67.

26. F. Adamiyat, Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, Tehran, 1967, p. 3.

27. For more details see Ibid., pp. 3-4 and Hasht Bihisht, introduction.

28. Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, p. 5.

29. Ibid., p. 6.

30. Letter to Malkam Khan, dated 1308/1890-91.

31. Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, p. 15.

32. Ibid., p. 32.

33. Introduction to Takvīn va Tashrī'.

34. Ibid.

35. quoted in Andīshāha-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, pp. 275-276.

36. n.d. letter, quoted in Ibid., p. 277.

37. Kitāb-i Rizvān.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Salārnāma, vol. 1, p. 155.

41. Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, p. 7.

42. E. G. Browne, Press and Poetry, Cambridge, 1912, p. 17.

43. Hasht Bihisht, introduction. H. Kamshad, in his Modern Persian Prose Literature, Cambridge, 1966, pp. 22-23, claims that Isfahānī did all the translation alone.

44. Ibid.

45. Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, p. 12.

46. letter dated 7 Zu'qa'da 1310/23 May 1893, quoted Ibid., p. 278.

47. Yahyā Daulat Ābādī, Hayāt-i Yahyā, Tehran, 1957, vol. 1, p. 125.

48. Letter to Malkam Khān, dated 1 Shawwal 1310/18 April 1893.

49. Letter to Malkam Khān, dated 27 Ramazan 1310/15 April 1893.

50. Letter to Malkam Khān, n.d.

51. Letters to Malkam Khān, dated 5 Rabī'al thānī 1308/18 November 1890.

52. Letter to Malkam Khān, dated 12 Rabī'al awwal 1311/23 September 1893.

53. Letter to Malkam Khān, dated 4 Safar 1310/28 August 1892.

54. Letter to Malkam Khān, n.d.

55. For names of members, see Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, p. 22, footnote no. 2.

56. Letter to Malkam Khān, dated 7 Jamādī al thānī 1311/16 December 1893.

57. Letter to his friend dated 1 Jamādī al awwal 1312/31 October 1894 quoted in Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, p. 277.

58. Letter to Malkam Khān, dated 1311/1893.

59. Letter to Malkam Khān, dated 12 Rabī'al awwal, 1311/23 September 1893.

60. Letter to Malkam Khān, n.d.

61. Letter to Malkam Khan, dated 4 Safar 1310/28 August 1892.

62. Ibid.

63. Hasht Bihisht, introduction.

64. Letter to Malkam Khān, dated 1 Shawwal 1310/18 April 1893.

65. N. R. Keddie, Religion and Rebellion in Iran, London, 1966, p. 132.

66. Letter from Nāzim ud-Daula to the Persian court, dated Rajab 1312/January 1895, quoted in Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, p. 27.

67. Letter to Malkam Khān, dated 11 Zuhaja 1311/15 June 1894.

68. Hasht Bihisht, introduction.

69. Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, p. 28.

70. Letter to Malkam Khān, dated Zuhaja 1311/June 1894.

71. Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, p. 29.

72. Hasht Bihisht, introduction.

73. Ibid.

74. quoted in Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, pp. 31-32.

75. quoted Ibid.

76. Hasht Bihisht, introduction.

77. Ibid.

78. See Lutfullah Khān Asadābādī, Sharh-i hāl va āthār-i Sayyid Jamāl ud-Din Asadābādī ma'rūf bi Afghānī, Tabriz, 1948, p. 65.

79. M. Malikzāda, Tārīkh-i inqilāb-i Mashrūtiyat-Iran, Tehran, 1949-51, vol. 1, p. 181.

80. M. Tabātabā'ī, "Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī va Shaykh Ahmad Rūhī", Muhīt, No. 3, 21 Shahrivar 1326/1947, p. 21.

81. Ibid.

82. See Ibid; Vasīqī, Sayyid Jamāl ud-Dīn Husayni, pp. 340-344; Hasan Pisishkzāda, Rūhiyāt-i sharq va qarb, Tehran, n.d., p. 229; A. Kasravī, Tārīkh-i Hījda Sāla-yi Azerbaijan yā dāstān-i Mashrūta-yi Iran, Tehran, 1939-41, vol. 1, p. 136.

83. I. Bāstānī-Pārīzī, Khātūn Haft qal'a, Tehran, 1965, p. 130.

84. Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, p. 42.

85. Ibid., p. 46.

86. Ibid., p. 56, footnote no. 1.

4

KIRMANI'S SOCIO-ANTHROPOLOGICAL IDEAS

Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, in his non-Babi works as well as, paradoxically enough, in some parts of his Babi essays, reveals himself to be an empiricist, a naturalist and above all a rationalist. He shows matter to be the essence of existence, and the material world to be governed by definite, attested natural laws. This material world could be known through experience and reasoning. Knowledge reached through the senses alone cannot be trusted, for senses are, by nature, limited and therefore misleading. Consequently, in the process of studying a case, it is essential to doubt, "for it is in refuting that a valid proof is reached."[1] He writes, "reason rules everything" (ʿaql hākim-i har chīzī ast);[2] and also, "There is nothing nobler or superior to reason. Nothing but reason could be a proof (hujat), since a proof has to be rationally understood."[3] Perception (idrāk) is the basis of science and things are perceived either rationally or through the senses. However, even sensory experiences very often, if not directly perceived by the senses, come through the help of reason. Similarly, all rational experiences are first felt through the senses before the brain, or mind, registers them. Thus, the direct and perpetual relationship existing between reason and the

senses cannot be questioned.[4]

Mīrzā Āqā Khān also attempts to establish a basic order in the methodological principles of Science. He explains that Science investigates the causes of things in order to organize, classify and make use of them appropriately and in accordance with natural order.[5] The purpose of learning is to discover the true origin, condition and result of things. All three--origin, condition and result--are closely related to each other.

> If we do not begin with the origin, we will not know the condition; if the condition is not known, the understanding of the result will not be achieved.[6]

Thus he surmises that human knowledge will never reach perfection and completion unless the causes for the existence, preservation and destruction of all things are discovered and thoroughly understood. This road leading to knowledge and scientific discovery must be the path to be trod by all civilized men in search of truth and progress, men moved by the natural human drive towards an everlasting self-perfection.[7] We shall see later that this belief, uttered in terms borrowed from both a Persian philosopher and a French, enlightened philosophe, constitutes the basis of all of Kirmānī's philosophical and socio-anthropological arguments. In order to understand those ideas, we first have to enumerate and briefly summarize some of the main, basic principles on which he built up his philosophy of Science.

1. All philosophical ideas and concepts refer to the conceptual meaning of existence and non-existence (vujūd va ʿadm) be it in the material sense such as light, heat, cold, movement, good, evil, ...or in the non-material such as general, particular, attestation, science, ignorance, essence, cause.... That is, "if we want to attest and understand anything, we must understand it in terms of its existence and non-existence."

2. Similarly, the attestation of being and non-being (hast va nīst) is necessary. All logical axioms refer to those two primary concepts.

3. Existence is the source of all honours and perfections (sharāfāt va kamālāt); non-existence is the origin of all deficiencies (naqā'is); in the sense that all perfections would come into being, such as knowledge, power, life, heat,...and all deficiencies would return to the state of non-existence, such as ignorance, silence, darkness, destruction....

4. Both existence and non-existence are absolutes inseparable one from the other. The conception of the one inevitably implies the conception of the other. All objects we observe are a mélange of existence and non-existence, just as light is mixed with darkness, as life is bred out of death, as greatness is derived from

smallness. In other words, there is no such thing as a pure being or a pure non-being. All abstract concepts are necessarily relative.

5. Unity and being (vahdat va vujūd) are both synonymous and both share the same abstract origin. A similar relation exists between light and perception, perfection and eternity, proof and life, and the like.

6. Simple and compound, general and particular, substance and form, concealed and witnessed, deficiency and perfection, negative and positive...all are seemingly in opposition yet in reality they are all complementary.

7. Precedence and subsequence (taqadum va ta'akhur) do not exist only in time and space, but in a variety of other meanings. Precedence in time cannot, in fact, be considered as precedence since what comes first in time is in essence part of what comes next, and vice versa, what comes next is part of what comes first. A comparable argument could be used for the same concepts in terms of space. Similarly, there can be no clear distinction made between the two concepts place and sphere (markaz va muhīt). In truth both are identical, and it is not possible to

determine what is sphere and what is place, especially since the recent discovery of endless space and numerous other open planets where both are confused.

8. Knowledge (ʿilm) is what is known (maʿlūm). On the one hand, "knowledge is prior to the known" for if it were not known, knowledge would have been conversant with unknown (majhūl). On the other hand, "The known is prior to knowledge," for if it were not known, with what would knowledge be conversant?

9. Essence (mahiyat) consists of "absence after existence" (fuqūd baʿd az vujūd), negation after affirmation. Essence is neither existence nor non-existence.

10. The origin (mabdā') and the point of return (maʿād) are one and the same. That means that at no matter what point the world of existence ends, that point is the same point of origin. In the sense that if, supposedly, we invert precedence in time, then the true origin of things would appear as the end point of time.

11. Motion (harikat) means "a gradual existence and action coming out of force". Heat is a product of motion, and nature is the source of motion. So, all existential motions are directed

towards utter perfection, and the goal and laws of nature are for general good, as all created things without exception are moving towards progress and not towards backwardness or ruin. All things and beings, be they mineral, vegetable, animal or human, are subject to that same law of perfection and progress. Thus there is no end to nature's progress, and the existential world movement. Without doubt, "any foundation that is destroyed by the world of nature is done for the sake of reforming defects and perfecting facts. If any species is extinguished, it is to bring about a nobler kind and a finer race."

12. According to some philosophers, the "point of knowledge" (nuqta-yi ʿilm) is knowledge of things happening to and experienced by the self. Any other knowledge springs from that primary knowledge, just as Socrates had stated that "knowledge of oneself" is the starting point of learning.

13. Originally, the human body was united to the animal, vegetable and mineral bodies, but has now been separated. The spirit and soul (ruh va nafs) are sense and motion (hiss va harikat). The center of motion must be mechanical wheels and tools, and instruments of electrical motion. The vegetable spirit (ruh-i nabātī) is the power of growth and constancy.

14. Knowledge of the realities of existence is based on recognizing the concept of origin, or source (badā'), and in believing in the principle of "abolisher and abolished". Without that basis there can be no meaning to and no understanding of progress and the appearance of existential perfection. By abolisher and abolished is meant a necessary and natural order of things, through which all existing beings and things reach a second stage of existence after the first one has been destroyed or abolished, a latter stage being a more perfect stage than a former. New advents do not make their appearances until the preceding ones have reached their most perfect stage. This process of perfection is endless, perpetual.

By analogy, human knowledge and perception are described as having, at each different age, a definite "stop-limit" (had-i yaqfā). And each period of human learning is more advanced than the previous period. Thus, it can be stated that the concept of God held by the first men, compared to our contemporary concept of God, was inferior and backward. This, however, does not mean that our ancestors lived in error and blasphemy, for their perception and understanding, their reasoning, could not have gone beyond that definite limit.[8]

It is irrelevant for our purpose here to point out the specific original source of each of Mīrzā Āqā Khān's main ideas, item by item. Mr. Adamiyat has already attempted to do so in his own work. Suffice it to say that Kirmānī chiefly borrowed the theory of natural evolution from Darwin; the term "natural drive" (harikat-i Jauharī) from Mullah Sadra; the glorification of reason from Kant and from classic Muslim philosophers; the belief that ultimately all perfections would come into being and all deficiencies would be abolished into oblivion from Suhravardi; the relativity and interrelationship of all abstract concepts from Hegel. We shall see later that other great thinkers such as Plato, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Comte, Spencer, Ibn Khaldun and, naturally, the Bab himself, have provided him with useful theories.

After having summarized these basic logical and scientific principles, without going deeper into an analysis of Kirmānī's philosophy, which is not the main focus of this work, it is important to show their significance and the novelty they imply. Therefore (overlooking his more abstract notions on the conceptual meaning of time and space, place and sphere, light, heat and motion, knowledge and the known, ...) our first and most obvious conclusion is that the author, partly inspired by Muslim and Western philosophers, saw order rather than chaos in the universe, and a sense of purpose and continuity in

nature's course. He also professed a total, sometimes simplistic, confidence in reason and an incurable optimism in his faith in a world and in a human nature that are perpetually driven towards an always greater perfection. The second conclusion, and a more significant one because of its novelty to the Muslim and Babi world, is that he discussed the origin of the world and man more in materialistic and rational terms than in terms of religion and divine revelation. There lies his true belief: in matter and in reason, both governed by laws of nature. We shall see later that very often Kirmānī would lapse into a religious tone, and would voice faith in the existence of a Supreme Being, Creator of all things. We shall endeavor to explain such inconsistencies in, first, his inability to divorce himself totally from religion for some political as well as personal reasons; second, his intellectual immaturity which prevented him from fully grasping and digesting the new material he came across in his wide-ranging readings.

In this chapter we shall study his theories on (1) the world, (2) society, (3) religion and nature, and (4) man.

The World

Toward the end of the eighteenth century Europe began to be acquainted with the French scientist Laplace's nebular hypothesis

that "the whole visible universe is an evolution of things, arising from the condensation of vast tracts of gaseous or vaporous matter scattered through the regions of space."[9] By the middle of the nineteenth century, it had already been established that "the matter of the entire visible universe was largely identical with the chemical elements known from our own solar system. In the fury of plutonic fires and wandering gases men began to seek the possibility of piercing through that hitherto impenetrable veil which seems to separate what we term inorganic from what we term organic and vital."[10] Thus the organic world was directly linked to cosmic phenomena.

In conformity with Laplace and other modern natural scientists' theories, Mirza Aqa Khan related the beginning of the earth with the "fluid fire-ball" (atishpara-yi sayal). He explained that all appearances and all effects due to light, heat, electricity, magnetism, matter and motion are determined by the "world of the first molecule" (alam-i zarr-i avval) or atom (using the Latin term). The existing world consists of: atom or "molecule of effective mass" (zarrat-i jirm-i athiriya); "fiery molecules" (zarrat-i nariya); "atmospheric molecules" (zarrat-i havaya); "magnetic bodies or matter" (ajsam-i mighnatissiya); "single elements" (anasir-i mufrida); and, finally, the world of bacteria and germs.[11] He saw in the atom and the interaction of various atoms the origin of living bodies, their growth and

reproduction. The atom constitutes the unity of existence (vahdāt-i vujūd) and is absolute and independent; all other substances are merely its various manifestations, and have no independent existence of their own.[12] He added that all earthly happenings and events are products of the world of matter,[13] and concluded:

> Therefore, there is no need to suppose another cause for the changes and transformations happening on this earth.[14]

He stated that all living beings, vegetable, animal and human, are products of the atom and of chemical compositions. Following Darwin, whom he praised highly, in his theory of natural law of evolution (qānūn-i tabīʿī tabaddul-i takammulī) he went on to say:

> Recent geological studies have proven that all animal species underwent bodily transformations throughout the various periods of their existence. Samples of their different past shapes are found in animal fossils.[15]

Similar changes have occurred with plants. Man is also subject to this law of evolution, and he could trace his origin to certain animal species. Not only could it be said that man is basically an animal, but he is also part of a hierarchical order of evolutionary beings, vegetable, animal and human, the latter being the noblest. For man is life at its most perfect stage.[16] His excellence comes from the fact that he is endowed with reason (ʿaql) and a reflective power (quva-yi mutafakira).[17] Evolution follows two laws: (1) Sélection de nature (in transliterated French), that is, the survival of the most

useful (anfā') and most balanced (a'dal); (2) preservation of the self and of the species (baqā'-i nau'va hifz-i shakhs).[18] Nature has provided men and animals with necessary qualities and functional bodies for their existence in the immediate environment and the preservation of their kind, such as the heightened sense of smell of the dog, migrational instinct of an ant, warm fur of a bear, wings of a bird.... These are the great wonders of nature that have bewildered the greatest minds of the world.[19]

Inanimate objects are entirely governed by the laws of nature. Animals that possess senses but are deprived of the faculty of reasoning basically are subject to the same natural laws with occasional exceptions. Vegetables, more than animals, are subject to the rules of the world of matter. As for man, science has proven that the human body is made up of chemical substances, and that thinking is the direct effect of the constant working of certain nerves of the brains. All nervous activities are consequences of the chemical activities of the body, which could sometimes become abnormal if exposed to outside changes. Similarly, all feelings and emotions are governed by the mechanical activities of the nervous system. In short, all sensual and mental faculties are the products of physical forces. Therefore, man, like all other beings, is subject to the same natural principles. However, because of his reasoning faculty, he

can control many of his own activities, Thus, we know by experience that social institutions, products of the human mind, are often incompatible with natural laws and principles. It must be admitted that there is a a great difference existing between the rational and the natural worlds. Matter is always subject to nature's rules. There is more order in the world of matter than in the rational one, due to man's typical weakness both emotionally and intellectually.[20]

The Origin of Religion

Mīrzā Āqā Khān accounts for the origin of gods in primitive societies in terms of men's fear and incapacity to understand or control the different natural elements such as fire, earthquake, storm, and flood. Fear inevitably led to the need to humble oneself and to pray to those very elements which went beyond their understanding and to deify them. Ancient Iranians came to call them Dīvs. People held them responsible for all nature's changes and happenings. A shining sun was seen as an expression of the gods' happiness and good mood; cloudy skies reflected their anger. All ancient nations--Hindus, Persians, Greeks, and Romans--believed in gods whose origin lay in men's fear of wild and terrifying earthly elements. Supernatural spirits were attributed to some animals, trees, rocks, named génies (in French, transliterated). For instance, a horse that possessed extraordinary racing speed, an evergreen tree, or an

animal that was very useful to mankind, were specially treated. Thus the Parsees venerated Rostam's horse and Khusrau's stallion, and considered a cow to be holy. Such beliefs were extended to inanimate objects, including forests, rivers, and the like. Venus, Neptune, Mércury, and Hercules are examples of supernatural, man-created idols. Worship began in the imagination. However, with the growth of the arts of painting and sculpture, idols came to exist as portraits or as effigies. Shrines and temples were offered to them. With the creation of many such gods, there developed a more or less sophisticated hierarchical order of deities, headed by the king of all Dīvs, the Mahadīv. Some men went to remote mountains and forests to be close to them and worship them better. A few went so far as to foresake human society and material comfort to settle in the wildest parts of the country and to dedicate their lives to the worship of the gods. The sacrifices and hardships they went through sanctified them and aroused the admiration and respect of the people who, gradually, came to venerate them and consider them as their religious leaders, thus bestowing upon them great power. It is in this fashion that religions were formed and prophets made their first appearance in primitive societies.

At a later stage, men felt the need to refer to less fearful, more soothing, more merciful idols that would appeal to their sense

of the beautiful and the good. Fairies, or Parīs, were therefore created as being the innate enemies of the Dīvs. They existed in the loveliest natural spots such as trees, flowers, springs, mountain peaks, and were considered to be the cures to calamities brought about by the Dīvs.

Dīvcha bīrūn ravad Firishta dar āyad.

(As the div goes out the fairy comes out.)

This belief in fairies which were sought in beautiful natural environment helped men to overcome their fear of nature and to develop a better understanding as well as a growing appreciation of natural phenomena. The change of seasons was then related to the movement of the sun in the sky, which in turn attracted their attention to the celestial world. They came to believe that the fairies lived in the sky, occasionally paying men a visit on earth. This led to the worshipping of the stars and especially of the sun, king of all stars. Astrology, astronomy and, later, other sciences were thus founded. The early history of mankind is divided into three major periods:

1. Age of the dīv and mahadīv.
2. Age of fairies.
3. Age of growth of civilization and progress.

Each of these periods corresponds respectively to the following ages of a child: one to three or four years old; four to eight years old; eight to fourteen years old.[21]

In his socio-anthropological account of the origin of religion, Kirmānī surmised that belief in gods was reached neither freely nor determinedly, but irrationally. Such worship, essentially based on fear, inevitably became detrimental to the existence and livelihood of men. This gave rise to new religions and new prophets who should be considered as the "spokesmen for nature's call" (lisān-i daʿvat-i tabīʿat), or as "nature's missionaries" (daʿyān-i tabīʿat). They appeared from among all nations, and they brought a message suitable to the time and conditions of each people. Their task was to bring civilizing laws to the primitive people, moral and philosophical principles to the civilized, belief in "Nature and Matter" to the superstitious, spiritual and holy values to the corrupt. All religions had one and only rule, which was:

> The law of natural disposition and of nature's exigencies (qānūn-i khulqat va ijābāt-i tabīʿat), which brings changes and innovations necessary for reforming each nation at each age.[22]

Thus Zoroaster came to Iran to save Iranians from worldly corruption and to bring faith in heavenly principles. He differentiated Good from Evil, yet considered them as two separate entities existing and active, both being part of the world of nature and matter as two powers. Among other nations sprang the belief in One God to whom all perfect attributes were given as He was the Creator of all things and beings.

Here Kirmānī's conclusion is the following: religions differ because of the various personalities of the prophets themselves; basically all religions are one and the same. Their goal is to create a god and a faith. Reason is not involved in the process.[23] In other words, our author disregards the divine nature of man's beliefs. He does not stop his discussion of religion with this. However, before proceeding further with his controversial argument, we should like first to briefly relate his similar views on the historical origin of society and secular government.

The Origin of Society and Secular Government

Society, Kirmānī writes, grew out of men's need of one another in their daily struggle for a livelihood. Man is also social by nature (madanī'l tabā'), created to live within society. Once groups of men settled permanently together, they felt the need for organization, for rules to establish order, and therefore, a government and a leader to enact and enforce those rules.[24]

> Since no leadership could exist without power and sovereignty, each leader had to resort to all means and ways to establish his own rule. This is a natural fact. Most animals who live in groups choose their leader in the same manner.[25]

Rulers began to be selected from among the strongest men, and allegiance was paid to whomever was feared most. Thus kingship and political government was also based on fear and hope. In a

manner very reminiscent of Rousseau, but in a much simplified form, Mīrzā Āqā Khān explained the meaning of a contract (ʿahd nāma) established between the individuals and society (jāmiʿa). He states that anyone who joins the society declares, business-like, that he submits a written agreement whereby he, in proportion relative to his bonds and shares, puts himself at their disposal and pledges assistance to them. The members of the society in return agree to accept him, promise him total support and all their power at his disposition to protect his rights and preserve him from any harm. Thus the essential function of a government was to fulfill this contract.[26]

The sovereign power has always been, and still is, different from the religious power. Both powers rule side by side. At times the prophet and the sultan were one and the same person, and the latter was therefore considered as the Son of Heaven (pisar- āsimān). Most often, the two powers were in the hands of two different individuals. The balance of power was consequently rather precarious, as each leader would attempt to assume greater authority than the other.[27]

Religion and Government: "Two National Forces"

Kirmānī believed that a people, or a nation, is like a raw

material that can be shaped or molded rather easily. The "molders of a nation's face" (musavvar-i sūrat) are of two kinds: (1) religion and its leaders, that is, prophets and ulama; (2) government and lawmakers, that is, kings and rulers. Thus any nation in the world needs either a code of law set up by an assembly (majlis), or a true religion founded by a learned man (hākim), or by a prophet (payghambar).[28] Religion is necessary to bring into the open the good human nature which is often hidden within the individual. It is as necessary as the water that the gardener gives to the trees for them to blossom.[29] Obviously then, prophets appear in nations that have sunk into such a low level of ignorance and social and moral decay that its people have lost their innate human power to see what is good for themselves. There were therefore prophets in Arabia, Africa, India and other "savage and barbarian nations" (millat-i vahshī va bārbār), but none in the more civilized nations (millat-i mutamaddin), where knowledge and science progressed.[30] All prophets, political leaders, learned men and philosophers should bear in mind the fact that their sole purpose should be the intellectual, moral and material progress of their nation. History shows that there were many such great men who helped their people to follow the path of progress and to raise the level of their human dignity: Peter the Great in Russia, Zoroaster in Iran, Luther in Europe.[31]

How do the religious and secular powers work? Since both came to being because of man's fear of his environment and of his fellow men, their existence follows natural law. Faithful to his philosophical principles, summarized above, that all abstract concepts are relative and interrelated and that all opposites are in fact complementary to one another--in other words, that there is a direct dialectical relationship between them, thesis and antithesis forming the synthesis--Kirmani based the driving force of nature on two human dispositions: Fear and Hope. He described them as two opposing forces which, if well integrated, create harmony, balance and moderation, all necessary for the normal growth of a man's personality and a nation's civilization. The function of religion and government is to prevent corruption by keeping Fear and Hope checked within proportionate limits.[32] Our author continues his explanation by stating that, whereas lack of fear in an individual's character leads to incurable corruption, hope causes motivation and energy. Without hope, all the hardships which one naturally goes through in life would exert such heavy pressure on oneself that nature's progressive course would be obstructed. Fear and hope provoke both restraint and expansion. They are comparable to the flux and reflux, flow and ebb of a tide.[33] If at one time within a nation hope reigns supreme over fear and succeeds in banishing the latter, self-indulgence, excessiveness of sensual pleasures and material comfort result, leading

inevitably to national decadence. Fear is then restored only through the sword of the enemy who invades the nation.

> It seems that the defeat of any nation occurs when lust and natural desires are in excess in that nation. The history of the fall of the Greeks, the Indians, the Iranians and the Romans at various ages has quite well demonstrated this theory.[34]

Throughout the ages there were times when the rule of a despotic king and of fanatic ulama was so oppressive that it stifled the normal functioning of the natural forces, and fear overcame hope. Here, Kirmānī emphatically warns that a nation cannot achieve happiness and progress unless there is harmonious coordinated interaction between the three powers: Nature, Religion, and Kingship.[35] His tone is definitely sternly moral, but also secular. He puts the political and religious powers, whose "raison d'être" is to serve the nation, on the same level as nature, which he conceives as essentially different from the latter, as we shall see later. However, in Hasht Bihisht, his Babi work, where, obviously influenced by Ibn Khaldun, he expands the theory that the rise and decline of a nation depend on the degree of its cultural sophistication, he still speaks in nationalistic terms yet adopts a more religious tone. That is, omitting the role of nature and secular government, he shows religious zeal to be the driving force behind any national prosperity. He writes that a nation, having reached the peak of civilization, begins its decay due to corrupt, easy living. Thus ancient Egyptian civilization, in spite

of the science and progress it had achieved, corrupted the people's character. The Phoenicians who used to be the most powerful nation on earth, accumulating tremendous wealth from their sea trade, are now a forgotten people. The same disastrous decline occurred to the Babylonians, Jews, and ancient Greeks, who were

> once the source of human happiness, the torch-bearer and spreader of science and philosophy in the East and the West, who gave birth to such great philosophers. When civilization reached its height... easy life corrupted the people's character...with the result that this honorable nation was finally defeated and conquered by other nations....And that was the end of its fortune and happiness.[36]

A similar fate befell ancient Rome and Persia where

> The effects of culture growing among its people annihilated the nation's greatness and dignity.[37]

When under the direct inspiration of faith and religious zeal, the Muslim nation, spreading from its small island, conquered within a short period lands that extended to China on the east and to Andalus on the west. Thus "a handful of barefoot Arabs" managed to bring vast mighty empires under their control. However, the highly sophisticated civilization of the Abbasids in Baghdad and of the Umayyads in Andalus undermined the strength of the Caliphs, and eventually brought the downfall of the Muslims at the hands of the Mongols. The book A Thousand and One Nights sufficiently demonstrates this degeneration. And, here, Kirmānī adds: Ibn Khaldun himself had exposed this situation in his book.[38]

Aside from these conflicting statements on the national importance of religion, which could be easily explained if we consider his Babi involvement while writing Hasht Bihisht, Mīrzā Āqā Khān contradicts himself a second time. By claiming that civilization, when it reaches its peak, becomes the cause of a nation's destruction, he is being inconsistent with his belief that knowledge and human progress are constantly moving towards higher stages of perfection, and that this process of perfectibility is endless, perpetual. Such inexplicable inconsistencies, we shall find, are abundant throughout his works. So much so that it is often hard to understand clearly what were his true thoughts. However, let us for the moment further develop separately his discussions of religion and of secular government.

Function and Necessary Qualifications of Religion

Throughout his discussions the author's main concern was, as already stated, the nation. He wrote:

> A religion is declared solid and best (matīn va bihīn) when it is based on, and in accordance with, the nation's nature and living conditions; and when it is the cause of that nation's progress, culturally as well as morally.[39]

But if the religion is the cause of the nation's ruin and misfortunes, then it is considered to be false and useless (bātil va ʿātal).[40] Consequently, the following conditions are essential.

1. Religion is like a medicine that cures a nation's diseases. This medicine must be one that fits the special case and stage of the disease. One can therefore say that a religion that cures one nation might not cure another. On the contrary, it might act as a poison.[41]

2. Similarly, religious laws and principles should change according to the times. For men change, societies progress and human conditions alter. Religion must follow the exigencies of time and of place. If it fails to do so, the result is disastrous. Thus we witness that Zoroaster's rules met the needs of the Achemeanian age but not of the Sassanians';[42] Moses' laws helped the Jews of the Pharaonic times to escape from slavery and personal misery, but are the cause of their present dark age and backwardness;[43] had the Christians not turned their back on religion in order to adopt the world of science and art, had they not challenged the authority of the Pope, they would have been the poorest and most ignorant nations in the world today.[44] Although India was the seat of Brahma, a God that in the past brought wisdom and science to the nation, it is now the country of the most wretched people on earth. Contemporary Muslims' fate is not any better than the Hindus', even though they once were the most learned, most enlightened people, and have been

to a great extent the source of modern European scientific progress. The reason for this backwardness is that both the Hindus and the Muslims, clinging to their ancient prophets and divine books, are not in touch with the present age. And all their beliefs are "like a dried out tree and a rotten bone".[45]

3. It is the content of a religion not its form that matters. For instance, whether one washes one's legs up to the knees or above them before prayer, the washing ritual is of no importance; cleanliness is the religious duty.

> Whether the doctor is called Docteur Muhammad or Monsieur Īssā or Mīrzā Īssā, the purpose of the prescription is to cure. Therefore, it does not matter whether this medicine is taken out of a blue or white bowl made of glass or of china.[46]

Kirmānī's main purpose here is to deny the universality of any religion. More than that, he sees religion as a pragmatic, useful national tool. Each millat needs its own prophet whose message would be compatible with his people's conditions. It is therefore vitally important to preserve this prophetic message from being infiltrated by popular beliefs and irrational rules, and to save people from spiritual degradation. The worst aspect of a religion is the superstition it breads, a superstition that springs from ignorance. The result of ignorance is backwardness. One could detect in all religions wrong values and misleading hopes. The Buddhist is waiting for his

God; the Jew for the king of Israel; the Muslim for the Mahdi. They all pass down, generation to generation, irrational beliefs and lies: the Jews from Moses, Christians from Christ, Muslims from Muhammad, Shaykhis from Shaykh Ahsā'ī, Bahā'īs from Mīrzā Husayn ʿAlī...

> The individuals and the sects differ, yet the belief is the same; the superstition comes from the same root.[47]

How could one escape such intellectual degeneration? Through Reason, through Science, shouts our writer who, throughout his works, remained faithful and consistent only to his worshipping confidence in these two.

> The more powerful reason and science are in a nation, the more religious beliefs decrease in importance. The more ignorant a nation is, the more fanatical it gets in its religious beliefs.[48]

For religion is always opposed to science and reason, because it preaches blind faith, it teaches acceptance without understanding. Yet what should be important is understanding, not believing.[49]

> A mind that has not experienced the shock of doubt cannot think right; a reason that is intolerant of opposition and abjuration cannot judge impartially..."[50]

In his Qahva khāna-yi sūrat, in which he exposes all religions and all sects without exception to vicious attack for their intolerance and the narrow-mindness of their views, he calls for tolerance and impartiality, two qualities which mankind is in dire need of to achieve peace, unity, and cooperation. In the person of a certain Sayyid Javād

of Shiraz, who does not figure in the original French version, he portrays what should be the model of the ideal enlightened, liberal man. We shall quote at length from that passage, for it is quite revealing.

Sayyid Javād is a learned and wise man who sees no better light than the lights emitted by knowledge and philosophy, and sees in ignorance the source of all of mankind's misfortunes. He accepts only the statements that have been duly proven, is tolerant of all faiths and all people. He believes that people's minds generally never developed independently, but are subject to the teachings of their elders, not unlike small children who, hands in their mother's hands, meekly walk by, led by the latter. They have therefore no free thoughts of their own. This constitutes the major cause for the conflict and disunity existing between men. For if men were capable of thinking clearly by themselves, they would have all reached the same conclusions.[51] Mankind, says the Shirazi, could achieve unity and common agreement only through an enlightened reason (<u>'aql-i munavvar</u>), which is the proper tool to get rid of erroneous values and beliefs, and to follow the right path independently. Alas, there exists no such independent mind amidst the human race.[52] He thinks that man's duty is to seek self-betterment, and betterment of one's family and relatives, of one's friends and acquaintances, of one's fellow countrymen, of one's nation, and of all human beings, thus

extending one's good wishes from the self to an enlarged circle encompassing all of mankind. He accepts no religious principles, no national belief that is not in accordance with true rationalism and in the interest of all men.[53]

What is his Truth?

> Truth means service to mankind; means the attempting to bring order; means enlightening the minds and thoughts; means establishing equal rights among all members of the human race; means protecting the sons of one's race; means high buildings, industrial inventions, factories, expansion of means of communication, promotion of learning, general welfare, execution of just laws.[54]

What is a True Religion?

> Religion is a concrete matter, not an abstract one. It is not sufficient to utter a few words attesting the unity of God. One has to bring unity among human beings, either through science and knowledge or through love and affection. What is the use of crying over Imām Husayn, if one is cooperating with the oppressors and wishes the worst for the oppressed? One has to destroy the oppressor and become the champion of the oppressed. What is the use of cursing, or cheering, Yazīd the dead? One has to help the living not the dead...[55]

Who is the True Prophet?

> Straight reason and clear proof are the sources of my words and the basis of my deeds. Man's own reason is the first prophet sent to him by God. Whoever refuses to obey this prophet has never been capable of believing in any divine Messengers.[56]

Which is the True Word of God?

I believe in Islam, in the Holy Koran. But which Islam?

> That true Islam that brings peace and security to all...that God has revealed to his Prophet on the First Day. The meaning and purpose of all prophets at all times were those divine truths exposed in various languages, those truths that the ignorant people in the passing of unhappy days have forgotten....That Islam that is the attestation and the proof of all religions, that is the sum total of all holy laws, the origin of all sects....That Islam that sanctifies science, and does not see in darkness and in ignorance a religious duty and necessity. That Islam that unites all tribes and all people on earth....That Islam that stands upon Nature's globe watching all beings and all things impartially, seeing the good in each thing in its place...[57]

Obviously then, to Mīrzā Āqā Khān religion is a universal code of ethics, a morality, while reason acts as a Supreme Judge, the surest and the most infallible, since only reason distinguishes the true from the false and the good from the bad; since it is only through reason that man can achieve knowledge, wisdom, and unity with his fellow-men. Rationalism, tolerance, and impartiality are the ultimate rules that guide men onto the straight path. The religions revealed by the different prophets, in their purest forms and when correctly interpreted according to the needs of the time, place and people, stand merely as variations of the same theme allowed to perform in order to meet the demands of a constantly changing world.

This brings us to the question of whether or not Kirmānī believed in the existence of a Supreme Being. This in turn leads us to the major problem of how to reconcile his utterances of faith in (1) Shīʿī Islam, as stated in some parts of his works; (2) Babism as proclaimed

mainly in Hasht Bihisht (two creeds which he so vehemently attacked in most of his essays); (3) Nature, for in his socio-anthropological exposés, he at times revealed himself to be pantheistic, or agnostic. Let us first turn to his notion of Nature.

On Nature

Apart from the two religious and secular powers, the author proposes the existence of a third power called "natural power" (quva-yi tabī'ī), which is not only greater than the first two, but is the driving force without which everything in this world would stop functioning. Whether it exists by itself, he says, as the naturalist and the materialist schools of thought believe, or whether it owes its existence to a Creator, as the believers in God maintain, the fact is that this quva exists as the Judge, the supplier and the agent (hākim va kārguzār va kārpardāz). In other words, it governs the world.

> It is the axis of the living world, the basis of existence, the substance of man.[58]

It is compared to the steam power that sets the wheel of man-made factory into motion.[59] This motion is directed towards the veritable natural goal which is man's progress and happiness.

The meaning of this part of his discourse seems to be of great importance to Kirmānī, for he begs his reader to pay full attention as he states his argument. He is fully aware of the "unorthodoxy" of

his ideas and of the grave danger of the ulama's persecution that these ideas might expose him to.[60] The nature of that quva has not yet been adequately studied, he admits, and it still remains a mystery even though thousands of natural science books have been written on the subject. We know the effect, but we do not know the cause. He sets up to point out to some of nature's wonders to show better the mystery of Creation. He addresses his reader thus:

> Take the apricot tree. Did you ever think of how and where its seeds were sown? What factory did it? What apparatus makes thousands and thousands of apricot trees all alike in their size, order and condition; hundreds of thousands of leaves, branches and fruit in the same fashion and arrangement?
>
> Glory to God (subhān ullāh) for that paint shop that gives such translucid brilliant green color to those leaves, such fine white color tainted with purple to those apricot blossoms, and the yellow color and the delicate fragrance to the fruit. Where is that paint shop , how and on whose command?...
>
> Why is it that no mistake, no confusion of color or taste is ever made?...[61]

He goes on wondering how such a talented painter with his magic brushes never runs out of inspiration, his colors never dry out.

> To sum up: Know, oh reader of this book, that the greatest minds of Europe have spent years and years trying, and they still are, to discover the secret. Yet, they remain unable to find the root of the truth about this natural force. They are puzzled. However, our own ulama, our philosophers, our poets, such as Ghazālī, Mullah Sadrā and Hāfiz-i Shīrāzī, have taken this great incomparable mechanism which is in the world of nature for a dark pit, an eternal hell; have despised it; have debased it.

He attacks them violently for their ignorance, then adds:

> I, the author of that book am Muslim. I have with great pain chosen to disregard the ulama's accusation of heresy, takfīr, but I have not closed my eyes to their own debasement.[62]

Kirmānī writes that whether it is created by a God or whether it is not, both statements are the same to him.

> For our purpose here is to expose the greatness of the natural force. Otherwise, the question of the existence or the non-existence of a supernatural world, and its solution, is not within our scope and has no relevance to our subject-matter.[63]

In Takvīn va Tashrī', though, he comes out with a much bolder statement by asserting:

> The law and order of Nature run everything, and the Creation is subject to the laws of Existence....It is possible to challenge some or even all of the Prophets' books, but the Book of Creation and the Laws of Nature are indisputable.[64]

Obviously, this eloquent eulogy to Nature reveals much more than the author's deep poetic attachment to it. It brings to better light his belief in "unity of existence" which is part of the world of matter, and his denial of the existence of a Creator, a Supreme Being, an existence which is devoid of meaning and substance, since it cannot be rationally proven. This belief, this denial, confirm his "scientific" conclusion which we have already quoted earlier, but which we would like to repeat here: namely, that everything in this earth is part and product of the world of matter.

> There is therefore no need to suppose another cause

> for the changes and transformations happening on this earth.

Mother Nature is the driving force, a mystifying force, the cause of which is not yet discovered.

We have seen that Kirmānī carried his religious discussions in "rational", "scientific", "anthropological" terms which denounced all religions as mere superstitions and fantasies, originating in men's fear and sense of helplessness in their wild physical environment. He had no hesitation in claiming that:

> All of peoples' worship relates to the worship of their own anxieties and thoughts. There is no difference between a person who carves an idol out of a stone and a person who conceives a statue in his imaginary world. Both forms of worship are idolatrous....To each person, his true God is his own truth....There exists no religion that has not been touched by idolatry. In truth, the belief in a God has come out of idolatry.[65]

And in adding the following verse:

> O Muslim, if you knew what idolatry is
> You would have been convinced that religion is idolatry.[66]

And yet, in the middle of these "blasphemies", as the pious Muslims would accuse him of, he never failed to protect himself from such accusations by swearing that he believed in the superiority of Islam as a religion, and in the Koran.[67]

> We are not necessarily saying that the Koran is not the book of God, or that the Prophet is not sent by God. To anyone who calls me Kāfir, I would reply: you are talking in complete ignorance and irrationality.[68]

Again and again, he painstakingly confessed his belief in Islam, in the Oneness of God, in the supremacy of Muhammad his prophet.

> I myself am Muslim, and am without need of proofs to believe and to have faith in Islam.[69]

In talking about Voltaire, whom he highly praised, he remarked:

> It is true that Voltaire was irreligious and was an enemy of all prophets. Even now, I still tremble in fear of admitting his sayings, for my sense of religiosity is appalled.[70]

In spite of all his protests to the contrary, unhesitantly we may reach the conclusion that Mīrzā Āqā Khān was definitely not a Muslim believer. For, as we shall see in the following chapter, he undermined the very foundation of Islam by criticizing and rejecting its basic principles. Before attempting to find explanations for these inconsistencies, let us first examine his Babi version of the subject.

As a Babi, Kirmānī asserted that religion is one of the greatest foundations of human thought. His conception of a Supreme Being, Creator of all things, was drawn in theological terms. His argument is the following. Since all concepts are derived from Existence (vujūd), nothing prevents us from saying that a Being, endowed with all perfect attributes, is indispensable. Once one feels that the essence of truth is "the reality of Existence and the reality of all things", one would reach the conclusion that He encompasses everything, and from there

one can say that Existence is One. Hence it would be very easy to prove the unity of the Creator, and to refute the hypothesis of Ibn Kamūna and those like him, who believed in a duality of Existence. This philosopher claimed that there could be no harm in believing that there can exist two Beings, opposite by nature, sharing nothing in common except for their own concept as Supreme Beings, that concept being in fact only nominal. Kirmānī refutes this theory by arguing that if both natures existed, then they together share existence; however, if one is existing (maujūd) and the other non-existing (maʿdūm), there is, therefore, only one reality left in existence. Thus there can be no more than One Supreme Being. Unless we admit that both are two separate natures and that the concept of Existence is only nominal. In that case, we must state that nothing in this world exists in reality, not even the Supreme Being, since we supposed Existence to be nominal and without reality.

Kirmānī continues his debate on the existence of God. If one, he writes, has in mind the concepts of existence and non-existence, simple and compound, and one wants to suppose the existence of a Simple Absolute without the doubt of non-being, though it cannot be conceived in substance and in reality, it is possible to conceive its names and its attributes. When we come to understand the meaning of an existence that is not bound to non-being and not mixed with

negation, with such an assumption there is no place for doubt. For by allowing in the doubt of non-existence, we are going against our own presupposition. After such an assumption there is no alternative besides believing in and accepting the existence of God.[71]

This is a classical demonstration of the existence of God, which claims that the Supreme Being is identified by His attributes. In other words, it claims these attributes themselves to be Absolutes.

Since the whole argument is built upon a hypothesis, an assumption that the author chose arbitrarily, it is more of a gambling bet than a true assertion of a divine existence. Because it is more of a mental exercise, a kind of a rational game of words so greatly favored by philosophers in general, this debate is in fact more of a philosophical polemic than a genuine religious confession of faith. It is, therefore, difficult to see in Kirmānī the Babi any other self besides the rational one, the same one who, in more popular terms that could reach a wider audience than the chosen philosophically minded few, attacked religious beliefs as fables. Surprisingly enough then, he seems to have been consistent with his denunciations of Babism itself in his non-Babi works. We have already quoted some of them.

On the other hand, how can we interpret his claim of unconditional

surrender to Islam? One can think of only one reason: his fear of religious and political persecution in the hands of the Persian authorities. If one keeps in mind the atrocities committed by the Shī'ī ulama encouraged by the Muslim mob's enraged fanaticism--such atrocities fill history of Muslim Iran and Kirmānī himself probably must have witnessed public massacres of so-called "heretics", those of the Babis being among the bloodiest of his lifetime--one can perfectly understand the fear that forced him to attempt, very naively and unconvincingly, to reassure his readers of the "respectability" of his thoughts.

Thus, a more careful analysis of Mīrzā Āqā Khān's religious ideas reveals him to be not so confused, not so inconsistent as we might originally have thought. He was in fact, like any ordinary politician, cautiously diplomatic in the choice of his terms and in the formulation of his ideas in his writings, so as to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, be it Muslim or Babi. He also, naturally enough wished to protect himself from any accusation of heresy. It is, therefore, easy for us to disregard his Babi and Muslim pronouncements as mere opportunistic, convenient cloaks that he could put on and off according to the situation he was confronting. His main, unique goal was in reality to uphold Reason and modern Science, both of which he saw as being directly and unavoidably opposed to Religion.

Nature and Function of Government

> Anyone who joins civilization must automatically relinquish his own share of rights, turn them over to the government....Otherwise, disputes would undermine its strength, and peace and order would be disturbed.[72]

Thus to Kirmānī, human society cannot survive without the rule of a strong government, which should consider the establishment of law and order as its prime duty. For society must be organized under a strict order, and whatever fails to abide by this rule must be abolished. Order (nizām va tartīb) is the true meaning of civilization, of justice, of moderation. The writing of a "Book of Rules", Nizām-nāma, is therefore indispensable. Unless there exists such a book, a code of law, which helps the government in ruling as well as checks any abuse of power by the latter, true liberty and complete freedom for human beings in this world is impossible. Kirmānī, then, had no doubt as to the function of a government. However, when it came to discussing the nature of government, we notice that he offered a variety of theories, one contradicting the other, but each one to be understood in its proper ideological context. We shall consider here three of his views: pan-Islamic, Babi, and secular.

His pan-Islamic view dates to the time when he was still enjoying Sultan Abdul Hamid's favors, and was closely associated with and a fervent follower of Sayyid Jamāl ud-Dīn Afghānī, the promoter of the

unification of the Muslim world. In a poem addressed to the Ottoman sovereign, he presented himself as a devoted adherent to Islam and to the Prophet.

> I desired all good for the Muslims, I adorned my heart with virtue.
> I desired that the Muslims might with one accord gird up their loins in unity.
> Might increase friendship with one another, might expel an ancient animosity from their hearts,
> ....
> And that, under the auspices of Hamid, a political union might be effected in Islam
> So that Turk should be Persian, and Persian like Turk and that duality might no longer remain in these great rulers,
> And that in like manner the learned doctors of Iraq should agree in recognizing the Sultan as Sovereign Supreme,
> And should swiftly cleanse their hearts of the animosity and should no longer talk of who was Sunni and who Shī'ī.

Then he spoke about the warm response he received from the men to whom he communicated his pan-Islamic idea. He blames the Persian Shah for opposing it.

> Since the essence of unbelief was in his blook, his wrath was kindled at the unification of Islam.
> A farthing is better than such a king, who has neither law, nor faith, nor religion.[73]

Such Muslim fervor, though, could not be taken seriously. For Mīrzā Āqā Khān's involvement with the pan-Islamic movement was a mere flirtation that lasted only a short period. It was expressed, as far as our research goes, only in a few poems, later published in Niẓām ul Islām's Tārīkh-i bīdārī-yi Irānīyān, which E. G. Browne had translated in his Press and Poetry of Modern Persia, and in his History of

the Persian Revolution. Kirmānī makes no reference of such an ideology in any of his other works. Unlike Afghānī and other Ottoman and Arab Muslim reformers, he made no attempt to promote the Islamic Sharī'at and compare it to a Western constitution. He therefore did not seek to develop further this notion of pan-Islamism, nor did he try to draw a definite program for the establishment of a unified Muslim world government.

In Hasht Bihisht, on the other hand, he sees in the Babi Bayan the Book of Laws which overrules the power of any government, be it despotic, constitutional, semi-constitutional, or republican.[74] According to the Babi ideal, however, government leadership should be in the hands of a Philosopher-King à la Plato, who is a superior individual, endowed with the most perfect qualities, ruling by divine right in accordance with the religious precepts, and in terms of his subjects' happiness and welfare.[75] His power is checked only by the Bayan. He condemns the modern philosophers and political thinkers who chose to dismiss religion as a superstition, mentioning the names of Rousseau and Voltaire, and the "destructive movements" such as the nihilists, socialists, radicals, anarchists.[76]

> They all corrupt and confuse the simple minds of the common people; encourage them to disobey their sovereigns and to give up their patriotic feelings. They help them to call for liberty, independence, equal rights, free-thinking, and the like...[77]

In short, Kirmānī here denounces those very philosophers, those very political movements which he upholds and highly praises in his "secular" works. We also notice that ht rejects republicanism and representative government. His model government is inspired by the ancient Greek city-state model, and by Platonic ideology, with, in addition, a religious connotation which he derives from Babism.

Kirmānī the rational, who appears to be the most sincere of the three, gives a totally different interpretation that wipes out whatever he had said before regarding government. He claims that since man can rationally distinguish good from evil, and has already proven his sound judgement and good taste in the management and organization of his various life matters and in the creation of the different sciences, arts and industries, the laws he would enact would also reflect the same rationalism and efficiency. Man is therefore in no need of religious laws. It has already been demonstrated in Europe where:

> The existence of philosophers and learned men has rendered the existence of prophets unnecessary. They say that science is more honorable than faith, and that it is better to understand than to believe.[78]

After having thus disregarded the holy books, he states that there exist two types of law: natural (huqūq-i tabī'ī) and religious (qānūn-i shar'). Prior to the establishment of human societies, men followed the natural laws. Civil laws were enacted after man's "socialization". However, it is an established fact that the natural rules are not only

the oldest laws, but also are the most valid and most reliable.[79] With the growth and development of societies, new problems concerning man's activities and relations to the government and to other fellowmen necessitated the enactment of new rules. The organization of societies thus led to the studies of laws, civil politics, and international relations. Kirmānī then endeavors to raise a few basic conditions for lawmakers to abide by.

1. Man-made laws should ideally be based on the character and mores of each nation. For one rarely finds that the political and civil laws of one nation fit another nation well. Some highly sophisticated laws are not suitable to a nation that is backward and ignorant. A law of equality cannot be established among a people where inequality in wealth, knowledge, and ability is predominant. A wise lawmaker is a person who enacts his laws after having taken into consideration all the various conditions and the situation of his nation.[80] Thus Kirmānī, obviously acquainted with Montesquieu's theory of the relativity of law, promotes the same idea, once again being unaware of his own inconsistencies. For, does he not admit in his Sad Khitāba that any government system is accidental and that the character and customs of any people are "subject to education and civilization";[81] and in his Hasht Bihisht that the "human species is capable of

reform and education"?[82] How could he reconcile such a self contradiction?

2. Civilization is constantly progressing and societies' needs vary with the passing of time. Laws must follow accordingly, and change from age to age. Lawmakers should not fail to take this rule into consideration.

3. Men need other men, nations need other nations in their daily struggle for their basic livelihood. They can therefore survive only in a cooperative, peaceful, harmonious co-existence and security. International trade is one important factor that improves international relations. Individual governments should promote trade, and facilitate the interactions, for:

> Trade strengthens the foundations of laws and frees men from their destructive and false beliefs....In any nation where trade is flourishing, we find law and order, and the protection of human rights. Peace, friendliness, material comfort, national wealth, industrial progress, and general prosperity will be the result of trade...[83]

Kirmānī condemns the practice of custom fees on imports, for he sees it as the greatest handicap for trade. True to the nineteenth century concept of liberalism and laissez-faire, he attacks these "narrow-minded people" who claim that trade "destroys some human merits such as hospitality, gregariousness, generosity, trust, friendship..."

by encouraging greed and self-interest. He goes so far as to assert that:

> Such goodness and beneficence as commonly practiced among tribes and primitive people cause great ruin to...human societies....The end-result of giving without taking, gratuitously,...is national impoverishment and misery, begging, waste of people's time, vainglory of the generous, animosity among the population.[84]

The real purpose of trade is exchange of not only goods, but also of ideas, knowledge, customs and mores. In short, trade helps broaden the horizon of people all over the world.[85]

It is difficult, if not impossible, to know more of Kirmānī's thoughts concerning his political ideology. For he was no political theorist, and he therefore failed to come up with any constructive program of his own. What he did was, as we shall see in the following chapter, to demolish the existing system of his country by criticizing and rejecting established practices and values, without offering any alternative. He merely suggested Western constitutional governments, as he understood and interpreted them himself through his readings, to be taken as an ideal, since the Western nations were politically, technologically and economically more advanced than the Muslim nations. Having had no firsthand information on the political reality in Western Europe, he tended to idealize the Western institutions, believing that what he had read written on paper by theorists

was actually put into practice by politicians. On the other hand, his interest in the West did not, as might have been expected, push him to further his knowledge by pursuing a thorough analytical study of the West's historical, cultural, and social background. It should be of no surprise to us, then, to notice the numerous inaccuracies, inadequacies, superficiality and shallowness of his accounts.

One example chosen at random would sufficiently illustrate our point. Proceeding with his discussion on international relations, he states that with the growth of civilization, the meaning of war and its laws has drastically changed. In the past wars took place for reasons such as pride, profit, fame, annexation of territory, booty. Consequently, the defeated people were always killed, cities were burned, the conquered nations were either utterly ruined or annexed. Nowadays, wealth and expansion of trade have become the main causes for wars. International law forbids the overthrow or elimination of any nation. Bloodshed and "other ancient savage customs" have, on the whole, been abolished. Populations never feel any antagonism or animosity, and they all live in security. The wounded soldiers are treated mercifully by the enemy, and given best medical care.[86] Kirmānī here is displaying a blind optimism and faith in law, and in people abiding by this law, an optimism comparable to that of the philosophes of the Age of Enlightenment. His optimism is even

blinder when he comes to discuss man and man's future.

On Man

Mīrzā Āqā Khān's ideas essentially express his idealization of man and his confidence in the voice of reason, and his belief that there is such a thing as an underlying human course of events. He claims that nature's course which is planned by, and follows, a definite law must reach its objective: progress and evolution, as well as preservation of the human species. Whatever diverts nature's course from its normal path is basically evil. For, the ultimate goal of life, the only absolute truth, is man's existence and his self preservation.

> Whatever is most profitable for the existence of man and the preservation of his kind in this world is true and just. Whatever disturbs the existence of man is false and unjust.[87]

Human beings are endowed with three kinds of natural impulses. (1) Preservation of the species which leads to love, justice, patriotism, protection of the nation and of the family, dignity, work, and discovery of the unknown.... Any nation that is blessed with this impulse achieves honor, progress and civilization. The contrary holds true of nations without the instinct to preserve the species. (2) The second impulse is that of self-preservation which conduces to easy living, material comfort, luxury and pleasure. The former impulse is of course by far superior to the latter, for one spiritual

delight is worth a thousand bodily pleasures.[88] (3) The third one is man's natural ability to progress (jauhar taraqī pazīr), an innate quality peculiar only to the human beings which perpetually moves them towards self-perfection (qābil-i kamālāt-i lā yatanāhī).[89] This is the most important law of Creation: a being, no matter how perfect he is, is still capable of reaching a higher and nobler perfection. Perfection has no end, for:

> The beginning has no beginning, the end has no end (al awwal la awwal lahu, al ākhir lā ākhir lahu).[90]

Kirmānī's idea is definitely inspired by Rousseau's theory of man's "faculté de se perfectionner". By adopting it, the Persian thinker attempts to prove man's free will. For, since man is always capable of endless progress, the degree of his progress or his decline is entirely dependent on his own choice and his personal efforts. Consequently, the cause of human misery lies in his unawareness of that freedom. Instead of seeking self-improvement on his own accord, out of sheer ignorance and laziness, taking Destiny, or Fate, as his excuse, he surrenders his existence to erroneous superstitious beliefs. Yet, man is essentially capable of reform and education (qābil-i islāh va tarbīyat).[91] Following Rousseau's philosophy again, our author surmises that men are born by nature equal, non-aggressive and non-competitive, living in general peace.

> The idea of attacking and defeating is the result of later thoughts, and one cannot say that human beings had this in mind from the start.[92]

The day men joined the social circle, the equality which existed among them was abolished, and they started wars. He adds that:

> The inequality now existing among the members of society, such as poverty and helplessness, is an unnatural condition and is an evil consequence of society. Government, education, and other institutions pertaining to civilization brought about this inequality.[93]

Here we must add that Kirmānī has not always been consistent in his belief in man's natural goodness. For, in Hasht Bihisht and in Takvīn va tashr ī,[ʿ] he stated that, at dawn of man's history, human nature was primitive and savage, with beastly tendencies towards wars and destruction. As soon as civilization subdued this barbarian nature, peace and security were established. Yet, in order to preserve this peace and national security, from internal chaos and external wars, it was necessary for the rulers to set up a military organization and encourage the development of weapons. Protection was achieved only through armament.

> As war weapons increased, peace and security increased, bloodshed and revolutions decreased.[94]

Thus today all governments are busy developing war technology and strengthening their military forces. Later, to insure self-protection, all nations will have to disarm and abolish wars for good.

> The increase of military forces, and the constant readiness for war mobilization will inevitably result in general peace.... For with these new inventions...and development of war weapons... no one will ever have the courage to start a war.[95]

Men would then reach the stage of complete civilization, co-existing peacefully, their knowledge enlightening the world, erasing all the dark sides of their once primitive nature.

Adamiyat in his book states that, unlike Rousseau, his main source of inspiration, Mīrzā Āqā Khān was not an enemy of society, but rather believed that human happiness and progress could happen only within the social circle.[96] However, we cannot help noticing a fundamental inconsistency in Kirmānī's thoughts. On the one hand, he echoes Rousseau in admitting that society corrupts the human nature, yet on the other hand he hails this same society and its civilization as man's greatest achievement as well as his only vehicle that leads him to self-perfection and evolution. Adamiyat finds an answer to this paradox by emphasizing the writer's belief that human progress could be attained only when the three powers of Religion, Government and Nature rule in perfect harmony, and that human misery and injustice is the result of a possible clash between the three. We remain sceptical and in disagreement with Adamiyat. We are more inclined to see confusion in Kirmānī's thoughts, a confusion probably due to the mélange of the materials he had read, not all belonging to the same school of thought, but which attracted his attention and which he attempted to reconcile, unconvincingly.

Kirmānī also claimed that good and evil could be rationally depicted and therefore:

> Man can rationally avoid evil, face good and assume a clear conscience.[97]

Obviously in imitation of Plato, he differentiated reason from the senses, asserting that the latter must be subordinated by the former. The man of senses should seek to reach the level of the man of reason. For man's ultimate goal is to establish Plato's Republic ruled by reason, which our author called the City of Knowledge and Light (madīna-yi fāzila-yi nūrānīya). Men must strive to make this dream come true on earth. To those who deny such a possibility, Kirmānī would reply:

> Any forward step made towards the level of the rational man is considered valuable. If it is possible to partly traverse this path, then it is also possible to go through the entire distance...[98]

In comparing the past to the present, he said, one cannot fail to notice how man's position has moved to higher perfection and self improvement. He passionately expressed, again and again, his faith in man's ability to achieve perfection.

> Without this faith, the human world path to progress would be obstructed....For this is the expected perfection and true happiness....As long as the world does not change to that degree, the human being will never be seated on his rightful throne of happiness.[99]

Conclusion

Mīrzā Āqā Khān juxtaposed contradicting ideas without being aware of the conflict himself. He argues, echoing the eighteenth century philosophes, (1) that man's history is characterized by the ability to unfold the higher mental attributes in a state of society to attain wisdom by degrees; (2) that man is capable of perfectibility, of progress; (3) that there is order and equilibrium in the universe governed by natural laws. These arguments directly clashed with his nineteenth century notions of the war of nature, natural selection, and the "survival of the fittest among random variations" which make man, along with the other forms of life, the "child of chance". His eighteenth century faith in the enlightening power of pure reason was opposed to his acceptance of the nineteenth century theory of evolution, which showed that man is not a consistently reasoning animal. His hymn to humanity went against Darwin's ideas, for, following the seventeenth and eighteenth century unilinear seal of nature placing man at the head of the animal kingdom, he put man at the center and summit of the Creation. His eighteenth century image of man as master of his fate, as a self-consciously rational being freely selecting among properly weighed alternatives, was already dismissed as an antiquated illusion by the Positivists and Social Darwinists whose determinism established a kind of scientific fatalism. Darwinism could be reconciled with a faith in the power of reason among fully

evolved and socialized men, and Kirmānī may have intended such a reconciliation, but he did not argue it consistently.

These were paradoxes and inconsistencies, which were the result of wide-ranging reading materials which proved to be too complex, too heavy for him to absorb easily. The unavoidable consequence was mental confusion. Thus, although he tried to be "scientific" in his exposé, he betrayed himself to be a romantic humanist at heart. There lies his greatest paradox which, whether he was aware of it or not, he was unable to solve.

We are here tempted to compare our Persian author with his European contemporaries. Europe in the 1890s was going through social disorder, economic crisis, and institutional malfunctioning which contributed to the growth of socialist parties and to the spread of Marxist doctrines. Among the intellectuals, men like Bergson, Peguy, Nietzsche, Freud, and Durkheim, doubt arose as to the reigning philosophy of the bourgeois class, the self-satisfied cult of material progress. They began to attack the doctrines of positivism which tended to discuss human behavior in terms of analogies drawn from natural science, and which they found spiritually stifling. They were alarmed by the threat of an iron determinism, the antithesis of the optimistic attitude of the philosophers of the eighteenth century.

They found the teachings of their preceding generation rather a burden, heavily crushing their youthful imaginations. They began to explore the realm of the irrational, attracted as they were by the unconscious, the mystical, the spiritual, and even the religious.[100]

It is difficult to find out whether Kirmānī had come across those new ideas. We tend to believe he had not. However, even if he had, we doubt his conversion to them. Because of his struggle against the excessiveness of the irrational, superstitious, spiritual elements that he found stifling in his own intellectual milieu, he was totally "sold" on positivism, and to the more empirical schools of thought. The merging Western European "spiritual renaissance" of the fin de siècle would have failed to attract his attention. For this ideology was not remote enough from that of his previous masters against whom he was now revolting.

However, we shall see later that Kirmānī's mystical sense of patriotism and nationalism, and his spiritual attachment to a "mythological" Iran, in a very curious way reveals him to be much closer to his European contemporaries than we might expect him to be.

Footnotes

1. Takvīn Va Tashrīʿ, Introduction.

2. Sad Khitāba, no. 24.

3. Hikmat-i Nazarī.

4. Ibid.

5. Sad Khitāba, no. 16.

6. Ibid.

7. Hasht Bihisht, p. 154. He discusses the same idea also in Sa Maktūb, pp. 98-99.

8. Takvīn Va Tashrīʿ, quoted in Ad. pp. 73-77.

9. Loren Eiseley, Darwin's Century, New York, 1961, p. 333.

10. Ibid.

11. Takvīn Va Tashrīʿ.

12. Ibid., p. 79.

13. Hasht Bihisht, p. 120.

14. Takvīn Va Tashrīʿ.

15. Sa Maktūb, p. 90.

16. Takvīn Va Tashrīʿ.

17. Sad Khitāba, no. 22.

18. Sa Maktūb, p. 99.

19. Sad Khitāba, no. 5 and Sa Maktūb, p. 99.

20. See Takvīn Va Tashrīʿ, and Sa Maktūb, p. 98.

21. Sad Khitāba, nos 6, 7, 8, and Takvīn Va Tashrīʿ.

22. Takvīn Va Tashrī ʿ.

23. Ibid.

24. Sad Khitāba, no. 10.

25. Takvīn Va Tashrī ʿ.

26. Ibid.

27. Sad Khitāba, no. 10.

28. Ibid., no. 32, and in Sa Maktūb, p. 96.

29. Ibid.

30. Sa Maktūb, p. 36.

31. Ibid, p. 104.

32. Sad Khitāba, no. 12.

33. Ibid, no. 13.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid, no. 10.

36. Hasht Bihisht, p. 148.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid, p. 149.

39. Sad Khitāba, no. 17.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid, no. 32.

42. Ibid., no. 18.

43. Sa Maktūb, p. 103.

44. Ibid, pp. 106-107.

45. Hikmat-i Nazarī.

46. Sa Maktūb, p. 24.

47. Ibid, p. 61.

48. Sad Khitāba, no. 25.

49. Risāla-yi Inshā'āllāh mashā'allāh, p. 24.

50. Sa Maktūb, p. 36.

51. Qahva Khāna-yi Sūrat, p. 19.

52. Ibid, p. 20.

53. Ibid, p. 22.

54. Ibid, p. 33.

55. Ibid, p. 34.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Sad Khitāba, no. 11.

59. Ibid, no. 12.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Takvīn Va Tashrī'.

65. Hikmat-i Nazarī.

66. Ibid.

67. Sad Khitāba, no. 25.

68. Ibid, no. 32.

69. Ibid, no. 7.

70. Sa Maktūb, p. 74.

71. Hikmat-i Nazarī.

72. Takvīn Va Tashrī'.

73. Quoted in E. G. Browne, Persian Revolution, p. 413.

74. Hasht Bihisht, p. 145.

75. Ibid, pp. 162-164.

76. Ibid, p. 150.

77. Ibid, p. 151.

78. Hikmat-i Nazarī.

79. Takvīn Va Tashrī'.

80. Ibid, p. 106.

81. Sad Khitāba, no. 5.

82. Hasht Bihisht, p. 159.

83. Takvīn Va Tashrī'.

84. Ibid, p. 116.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid, p. 114.

87. Sad Khitāba, no. 10.

88. Sa Maktūb, p. 99.

89. Takvīn Va Tashrī'.

90. Hasht Bihisht, p. 155.

91. Ibid, p. 159.

92. Takvīn Va Tashrīʿ.

93. Ibid, p. 98.

94. Hasht Bihisht, p. 169.

95. Takvīn Va Tashrīʿ.

96. Ibid, p. 98.

97. Hasht Bihisht, p. 17.

98. Takvīn Va Tashrīʿ.

99. Ibid.

100. see H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society, New York, 1958, chapter 2.

5

HASHT BIHISHT: BABI THOUGHT

Although the Persian Bayan absolutely forbids any commentary to it, for no one but the Bab himself has the right and power to do so,[1] Hasht Bihisht is a book that explores and explains Babi holy laws. It was written by Rūhī and Kirmānī together and inspired by their lifetime friend and instructor, Mīrzā Javād Karbalā'ī. In a letter addressed to E. G. Browne, Mīrzā Āqā Khān wrote: "Its idea belongs to the great Sayyid Hājjī Javād Karbalā'ī.... Though the expressions and words might be ours, its spirit is originally his."[2] We shall see, however, that not only the words were Rūhī's and Kirmānī's, but the spirit as well.

Of the two authors it is obviously Kirmānī who contributed most to this book. Many clues lead us to this conclusion: (1) In this book he repeats many of his own ideas exposed in his other non-Babi works. (2) At times he explicitly refers to his various essays. For instance, he refers the reader to his book Takvīn va Tashrī' for more detailed accounts on morality.[3] (3) We believe him to be the sole author of the last two chapters, for not only the ideas are characteristically his, but also his style is unmistakably his own peculiar style.

Adamiyat has also reached the same conclusion after having examined the original handwritten manuscript of the book, the last one hundred or so pages being written solely in Kirmānī's own handwriting.[4]

Hasht Bihisht promotes Babi ideology and moral precepts. Yet, if we compare it with the original Persian Bayan, we cannot fail to notice that many "unorthodox" views were added to it, views that at times oppose and at others totally negate some of the Babi ideas. The book is therefore studied here not only as a valuable historic document of Babism, but mainly as an expression of Kirmānī's thoughts and beliefs. It is a precious source to us, for it reveals the author's concern with and interest in those historical, political, and spiritual values which attracted him most in Babism. His own personal interpretation of them gives us an accurate picture of the man himself, his aspirations, his ideals, his faith.

The book starts off by claiming that Babism is a legitimate, universal, divinely revealed religion:

> We, the people of the Bayan (ahl-i Bayān), utter words that are general not particular. We address ourselves to mankind in general and not only to a few individuals.... We have been sent to bring unity and agreement among all, to eliminate conflicts.... Previous Prophets had succeeded to unify groups or nations under the banner of the Holy Word.... Our goal is to unite all under our Primal Point...[5]

> Our sharīʿat is above all sharāyiʿ; our religion the manifestation of all other religions; our law the reviver of all laws; our truth the sum total of all truths. Babism is the disciple of all faiths, follower of all sects, part of any rule, believing in any religion, be it...Sufi...mystic,...philosophical, ...naturalist, materialist, socialist, free masonic, anarchist, pantheist...[6]

> The rules of our holy sharīʿat are comparable to the religion of sun-worshippers in their antiquity, to the religion of Brahma and Buddha in their philosophical views; to the law of Confucius in its simplicity and relevance,...to the Gospel in its spirit and morality, ...to Islam in its rationality and universality.[7]

The Bayan provides rules for all and concerns itself with all aspects of life in this world. Its purpose is to bring the bodies from the world of matter to the world of lights, and to reveal the truths of the Promised Heaven. Its subjects are "the mores and deeds of the people of Heaven," a description of Plato's enlightened city. Hence it has been called the Rule of Heaven (sharīʿat-i janat) and the Natural Law (qānūn-i tabīʿī).[8]

The Bayan features fifteen special characteristics, which distinguish it from the rest of religious laws, and render it the best of all:

1. The laws of this Bayan are not limited to rank, class, race, place, nation, tribe or individual. Nor are they confined to a certain age, or special period in history. Other sharāyiʿ have changed according to the exigencies of time and people. Such

rules that were suitable to a certain nation, could not have suited another nation, for they were fashioned by the time, place and conditions of a certain people. They therefore depended on certain individuals, certain circumstances, and certain periods of history. The Bayan is free from such limitations, Hence it is the best qānūn. Those rules agree with all times, all places, are not bound to an individual or a time, have not been based upon definite conditions and milieu. Unquestionably they fit the conditions of all nations and all clans of the world. For instance, it calls for cleanliness, education, goodness, liberty, equal rights, love for one's kind,... Each rule has a profitable end, unlike other sharāyiʿ which do not see the end or result of a rule as the true purpose. Thus in the Muslim sharīʿat, duties such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, ablution, and seclusion of women, which were based upon the definite necessities of a definite period of time, are today considered as ends by themselves. It is the performance of those duties that now matters and not the meaning of the duties. In other words, importance is given to the means, not to the end itself. The Bayan, on the other hand, gives importance to the profitable result of such duties, and if the actual performance is neglected, the true results will not be affected.[9]

2. The rules are simple and general, not based on particularities and peculiarities. They are therefore the best rules of all sharāyiʿ and all religions. For the latter have rules which were founded for the self-interest of a nation. Thus people of the Orient worshipped the sun and the fire because they needed both of them. The Arab Bedouins worshipped the stars, because they excelled in the studies of stars. The Egyptians and Greeks who were scientifically technologically, industrially, artistically far advanced, in order to encourage further their people, sanctified men who, with some new invention or creation, accomplished something worthy of attention. Sometimes these men were honored with statues and portraits that were worshipped in temples. The Egyptians and Chaldeans even went so far as to deify animals, such as cats, which were symbols of agricultural prosperity. There were also people who worshipped fetishes representing what they lacked most. With a close analysis of the world's greatest holy books, we would reach the same conclusion: people's religion and holy laws were based on their own interest and their own needs, their own character. The Book of Brahma suits a Sufi-minded nation. The rule of the Torah concerns a divided nation that is in dire need of someone to reunite and civilize it. Zoroaster's word reveals the highly civilized, philosophically minded personalities of its followers

who had already established the supremacy of monotheism.... The Gospel fitted a nation that needed improvement because of its fanaticism, stubbornness, and aggressiveness. The rules of the Koran met the conditions of a primitive, savage nation which lived by theft, raids and plunder, as the people of Arabia in the Age of Ignorance.

> However, the true meaning of this great book, the Koran, was...improvement of character...progress of mankind, civilization, description of human evil and good...happiness...guidance toward the straight path...security and success.

What happened to prevent this?

> This sharī'at which had rules and principles based on reason and wisdom has not been well executed. For non-rightful Caliphs have substituted kingly power for holy religious power. They used Islam as an excuse for self-aggrandizement and expansion of their possessions. For this reason the Muslims remained ignorant of the truth and the meaning of the Koran.[10]

Thus God promised to the Muslims the appearance of a Mahdi who would reveal to them the true meaning of the Holy Book and who would announce the great Day of Judgement, the end of the world, and the beginning of Paradise.

The Bayan is the sum total of all prophets' books, of all religious truths, of all holy laws revealed to mankind. It brings about the promised heaven on earth, it reveals the true meaning of the Koran, it unites all religions of the world.

The Bayan has been revealed to a nation, Iran, which was once civilized but which with the passing of time sank into corruption by all kinds of beliefs and religions. In fact, any qānūn that fits the conditions of such a nation, and that can improve and restore it, would be adequate enough to bring general happiness to the world.[11]

3. This sharī'at is a "word by word translation of the court of divine justice". Its purpose is to fill the world with justice and equity and to abolish injustice. This is a goal which no other divine rule has been able to accomplish. They produced misery and injustice, for many of their laws were in fact evil laws hidden under the cloak of pious religiosity. For that reason movements were manifested in various nations which called for equal rights, demanded socialism (ishtirāk)--Mazdakis in the Zoroastrian nation; Bātiniyya in Islam; nihilists in Russia; socialists in Germany; anarchists in France; masons in England; epicures in Greece. The Bayan institutes such an equal and just law that the goals of such movements are attained without causing any harm to religion.[12]

4. The Bayan deals with everything, beginning from the point of origin, from the primary premises, the first causes to the end

result. Thus in dealing with the existence of any evil, it first seeks to find its root, understand its cause, evaluate its result, before deciding upon the means through which to eliminate it. Here, Kirmānī reaches a controversial conclusion. He takes as an example the bad relationship existing between men and women, builds up his case in a rational, logical manner by describing the wrong upbringing of both sexes, the wrong idea of marriage. He finally reaches the modernist conclusion that the remedy should be sought in allowing a pre-marital relationship, for at least four years, between a man and a woman, in order for them to be sure of their choice and of their compatibility.[13]

5. The Bayan's laws, unlike other sharāyiʿ, are direct, simple, comprehensible and believable. Yet they are not simplistic nor naive, nor shallow. For the philosophically minded, the theologians, it offers a great wealth of ideas and proves to be the true origin of human happiness. The execution of these laws is the key that opens all doors to unsolved problems.[14]

6. This Bayan destroys the concept of a trinity ruling the world. In the world three powers have always reigned supreme: prophetic power, kingly power, and philosophical power (quva-yi nubuvat, saltanat, hikmat) fulfilling the three basic needs of men: to

believe, to fear, to understand--the first needed by the simple-minded, the second by the savage primitive, the third by the noble enlightened. The Bayan abolishes the kingly power, eliminates the wild and savage disposition of people, and unites both powers of prophecy and philosophy.[15]

7. The Bayan's purpose is not to restrain man's horizon but to enlarge their scope, open up new frontiers, abolish differences and particularities, in order to unite all various nations, all human societies into one boundless true world. Differences are due to ignorance and can be abolished by knowledge. Thus people might differ on the problem of worshipping and this trivial subject separates peoples and nations. Simple and rational religious rules with obvious profitable goals are easily accepted by all people of all nations, such as cleanliness, honesty, education, liberty, equal rights,... Other sharāyiʿ have appealed to individual nations, peoples, tribes and have narrowed their horizon: Moses' laws were for the Israeli nation; Zoroaster's for the Guebre; Brahma's for the Hindus; Buddha and Confucius for the Orientals. The only sharīʿat that managed to spread more widely was that of the Holy Spirit (hazrat-i ruh) which, because of its simplicity, appealed to many Romans and Europeans who quickly adopted it.[16] Islam itself managed to spread only through the

use of the sword of the Arabs.

The Bayan can unite the world, too, because the modern means of communication have greatly facilitated ways for men of various nations to mix freely. This has also hastened the pace to unity, for people got closer to each other. The mores and character of the Westerners and Easterners have become so similar that soon all differences, all conflicts will disappear from among them. On the other hand, present day progress makes past sharāyiʿ irrelevant to modern times and conditions. For man has outgrown his past laws. The Bible does not suit the present political situation; Islamic sharīʿat suited only the Age of Ignorance and of savage, nomadic people, but does not suit people of culture and science. The Bayan, on the other hand, is so relevant to the present age that, willingly or unwillingly, the whole world will have to follow its precepts. Not one nation but the entire world population will execute its commands and reach universal agreement. The universality of the Bayan is possible because it leaves to people freedom of expression of ways to show their obedience to the Bayan. Thus, whereas Islam calls Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate, and the Christians name the Holy Trinity, the Bayan leaves the name open for the individual worshipper to choose in order to prevent conflict and disagreement.[17]

8. The Bayan's rules aim at general welfare; it does not discriminate against any one or any nation. It forbids imitation and belief without understanding. It encourages everybody to pursue his education and to learn the truth. Other sharāyi' force people to imitate their ulama and to obey their rule blindly. Consequently their followers remained in darkness, ignorance and backwardness,[18] deprived of progress and enlightenment and true learning.

9. The Bayan does not leave people in a senseless expectation of a tomorrow. It rewards in exact proportion to the deeds. It eliminates superstition from peoples' souls. Here the author attacks the "erroneous" beliefs of the Hindus' concept of reincarnation; the Torah's prediction of future calamities or happiness to its people; the spiritual delights and bodily inflictions of the mystics and the ascetics; heaven and hell as described by the Koran and the Book of Zoroaster.[19]

10. The Bayan does not believe in hierarchical categories of deeds allowed and things forbidden: harām, makrūh, wājib, mandūb, mubāh, for deeds are either totally forbidden or totally allowed. Good and evil are rationally depicted by men who, rationally, repel evil and accept good. Moreover, what in the past was considered forbidden, such as music, painting, sculpture, which

required skills and talents that could be of no interest to pre-civilization man, are now useful and of great importance for new modes of life.[20]

11. Knowledge and deed are identical (ʿilm va ʿamal), for the Bayan's principles are all in accordance with philosophical truth and all theories can be put into practice. Other sharāyiʿ, however, differentiate sharīʿat from philosophy, deed from knowledge. Hence they claim that religion must be non-rational (ghayr maʿqūl). Thus religious matters have always been held in contempt and sarcasm by rational people. Ghazālī was the first individual to have attempted to reconcile sharīʿat and ḥikmat. Mullah Sadrā continued the process; Shaykh Ahmad Ahsāʾī finally based philosophy on religion and sharīʿat. The present Bayan accomplished the unification of the two and made the problem of existence and unity the starting point of philosophy.[21]

12. All other sharāyiʿ are inflexible and resisting change and reform. This prevents the human world from progressing normally as it should and allows stagnation and backwardness. No one is ever allowed to change the slightest thing for fear of excommunication and persecution by the religious leaders. The Bayan commands reform and corrections, to the point of allowing changes to be

made within the holy precepts themselves. Obviously such broad-mindedness will greatly further world progress.[22]

13. Conversions to other religions are either difficult or impossible. A new convert has to be accepted by his co-believers as well as by the priesthood and he has to accept all religious rules and all priests. Otherwise he would be considered heretic. Similarly, new converts are never considered as equal and as genuine by the rest. Also, all religions are intolerant of one another. The Bayan admits all freely with no limits, and is tolerant of all other religions. A convert is considered a member of its religious community regardless of the others' acceptance or non-acceptance. The Bayan gives no one the right to excommunicate or to judge or to persecute others.[23]

14. The Bayan wishes liberty and freedom for all, and allows no one the right to torment another. Hatred of others is forbidden. It commands its faithful to spread and communicate all their knowledge and learning among others.

15. Other sharāyiʿ need the acceptance and belief of their followers. The Bayan is in no such need. All it asks for is understanding, for understanding is like accepting.[24]

If we compare these precepts as enunciated by the authors of Hasht Bihisht with those exposed in the Babi Holy Book, we notice some important, fundamental differences. The original Persian Bayan never claims that the preceding religions were bound to time and place, as well as to the individual. It believes that all religions, particularly Judaism, Christianity and Islam, were the true words of God revealed to mankind by rightful prophets. It states that the point of God's manifestation is Jesus in Jesus' time, Muhammad in his time, and it is the Babi in 1260 A.H. And with each manifestation God reveals himself at a nobler and higher level. For each subsequent manifestation is superior to the preceding one.[25]

Furthermore, each manifestation, that is each time a prophet appeared, brought about a new creation of the world and a Day of Judgement for the creatures who have lived in the world in the time interval between the appearance of two prophets. So as one can speak of "Louis XIV's century", one can speak of "Jesus' creation" or "Muhammad's creation" or a "Bab creation", to express the idea that all things were created anew with the appearance of one of the prophets. The aim of Jesus' teachings was a preparation for Muhammad's teachings; the latter aimed at the preparation for the Bab's teachings, which in turn prepare the way for the one God will manifest in the future. It has always been so since past eternity and will be so

till future eternity. Thus, creation is eternal.

But what about the Day of Judgement? If there is no end to creation, when does it occur? Babism claims that to each manifestation there is a Day of Judgement. Thus the day of Muhammad's appearance was also the Day of Judgement for the Christians. Those who believed in the Arab prophet proved that they were true Christians with this very belief. They obtained the fruit of the Gospel, which is the Koran. They were therefore judged by Christ appearing as Muhammad.[26] It therefore commands all sectarians to accept Babism as the true heir to previous prophets and to abide by its rules.

What happens in case of contradiction among some commands? If some commands in the new law contradict some other commands in the preceding law, than the latter are considered transitory and therefore must be cancelled, for they are commands of a past religion, and to continue to obey them would be heretical.[27]

Obviously, then, the authors of Hasht Bihisht, misinterpreting the Babis' sayings, chose to underrate the divine universal attributes it allowed each of the preceding monotheistic religions. Following some nineteenth century anthropological theories which they came across in their readings, they speak of Judaism, Christianity and

Islam in terms that emphasize their respective national characteristics and the exigencies of their time and circumstances, thus putting them at the same level as other religions, philosophies and political movements of all ages, throughout the world. On the other hand, they focus their attention on the most rational, most enlightened, most modern aspects of Babism, which prove the superiority of it over all other faiths. They point to--and rightly so--its tolerance, its progressive reforming spirit, its lack of superstitious beliefs, its encouragement for learning, in short, its relevance to contemporary society.

Let us now study in more detail those aspects and interpretations. The book is divided into eight chapters discussing the following topics:

1. Religious ordinances.
2. Personal ordinances or morality.
3. Household management and family relations.
4. Civil duties and political affairs.
5. Public duties, such as marriage, divorce, inheritance,...
6. Spiritual ordinances
7. Day of Judgement, qiyāmat.
8. Historical background of the Bayan.

For our own convenience and in order to remain as faithful as possible to the writers' plan, we shall adopt the same outlines, even

though at times it is not so adequate, as the chapters tend to overlap.

On Religious Ordinances

In this chapter the authors discuss in detail the religious duties of the faithful which mainly include praying, fasting and pilgrimage. Like Islam, the Bayan prescribes five prayers a day, each one containing a specific number of rukʿa and the utterance of specific words in Arabic. Thus, contrary to what the authors had said in the above-mentioned praise of Babism, these religious performances prove to be as ritualistic, as rigid, and as formal as the Muslim prayers. Fasting once a year is shown as a holy obligation for all individuals. Here the authors commit a minor error by stating that the age limit for fasting individuals is 19 to 38 years old, whereas the Bayan sets it from 11 to 42 years old. The most important of the authors' innovations, however, concern mosque prayers and pilgrimage. The Bayan definitely forbids common prayers by large crowds of the faithful gathered together in one place, and commands individual, separate prayer. The reason behind this order was the need to eliminate all prayer leadership, a function held by the most despised and usually unqualified religious officials, such as the Imām Jumʿa who often abused his prerogatives. The Bab believed in having each individual pray directly to God, without anyone else's intervention.[28]

Hasht Bihisht, however, claims that people worship better in public mosques or temples together with others. The daily, weekly, monthly, or annual meeting of worshippers in one place facilitates their direct communication with one another, leads to better brotherly relations and unity of all men, and encourages their devotion to the human world and their service to society. Thus the authors' consideration was social rather than religious, concerned as they were to see men unite their efforts to help one another lead a better life in this world. They go even further beyond the original Babi command by suggesting the formation of small societies or clubs, which would include not less than five and not more than nineteen members each. The small number allowed is due to the fact that better understanding and better cooperation are reached in small units. The choice of membership would be decided upon by mutual consent and in terms of the individual's compatibility. Each society elects a leader from among its members to represent it in its relation with other societies. The leader is chosen from among the most virtuous and learned. His duty is also to direct the members to the right path, the right way of life. All societies are ranked according to a hierarchical order. It is up to the members themselves to choose a center, be it a house, a mosque, or a pilgrimage site. Naturally, the larger the place is, the greater the amount of people who would profit from it.[29]

Such an organization is a concept totally alien to Babism, for it is on the one hand too worldly oriented, and on the other, contrary to the Babis' mistrust of and disdain for any form of religious hierarchy. We thus find nowhere any indication that Sayyid ʿAlī Muhammad had conceived such a plan. The Azalis, however, might have thought of it, for they were already much more politicized than the Bab's followers, as they turned their attention more and more to the struggle for nationalism and constitutionalism. A great number of their prominent men were active leaders of the revolution and therefore had acquired revolutionary tactics. Kirmānī, whom we hold solely responsible for developing this idea in Hasht Bihisht, as he has in his other non-Babi works, must have been directly inspired by the Freemasons' system of lodges which he was quite familiar with.

We notice a similar "secular interpretation" of the holy command to pilgrimage. The Bayan recommends pilgrimage to Shiraz, the new Mecca, where people can walk in freedom, security, and trust, and can pray and purify their souls. Here our author adds that in this city total freedom of expression is allowed, and that people are even requested to submit, either orally or in written form, their grievances and suggestions, if any, for reforms in the interest of the human community in general:

For the true purpose of this holy gathering is to

> form a large congress or parliament (in transliterated French) for all the people of the Bayan, which would be annually convoked by the notables and dignitaries of this sacred city. Its function is to take necessary actions for the general welfare of the faithful public.[30]

The original purpose of the Muslim pilgraimage to Mecca was precisely the same. Unfortunately, "the ignorant Muslims" had misused this excellent opportunity for "festivities in honor of human beings" and have turned Mecca into "a savage wilderness".[31]

Thus the meaning of pilgrimage is no longer spiritual salvation, its purpose no longer the performance of a religious duty. With our revolutionary authors it acquires a political significance and a humanitarian aim.

On Morality

In order to bring good, our author writes, one has to reform oneself first. For all laws and sharāyiʿ are based on the character of that particular nation which promulgates them. The more honest and better a character that nation possesses, the juster its rules will be. When it comes to practical rules (hikmat-i ʿamalīya), such as household management, civil policies and public principles, one has to act from the general point of view, and think of one's interest in terms of the interest of the whole kind.[32]

Here, then, the authors distinguish two aspects of man: the spiritual-rational, and the physical, the body. One's personal spiritual delights are always found in the progress and perfection of one's kind. For one is confronted with the clash of the body with the mind. Which is superior? To the Babis the mind is unquestionably the nobler of the two, and most philosophers seem to agree with them. Philosophy was first established when man rationally attempted to discover the secrets of nature's mysteries and of all beings on earth. The earliest philosophers in the history of mankind, Pythagoras for instance, conceived the world in man's own image, and considered man the summit of creation. From the time of Socrates, "when philosophy came down to earth from heaven", man began to seek the knowledge of Existence in self-knowledge. "Know thyself" thus became the starting point of all philosophical speculation. Man was thus revealed to be spiritually and intellectually the highest ranking creature in the universe, and bodily the lowest kind.

From this argumentation the authors draw the conclusion that in seeking to establish personal laws and rights, i.e. sharāyi' and philosophical principles, man should take the self as the starting point. But when it comes to morality, he should not forget that he stands at the bottom of the scale of all beings in the universe and that, therefore, he needs strict rules to elevate his base nature.[33]

There are seven primary virtues that one has to acquire. Love comes first and foremost, since it is the source of all virtues and perfection.

The second is motion (harikat), because it means constant change. The universe is constantly on the move toward progress and perfection. Motion is an essential quality for all beings.[34]

The third is piety (taqavā) in the sense of dissimulation, taqīya. Strangely enough, but understandingly, the authors see piety essentially to mean the ability to keep a secret. To them secrecy is the truth of all matters; and the keeping of a secret is the holiest duty of a man. A man who has no secret is a man without truth. Taqīya is the sign of true religion.

> The more taqīya, the more dissimulation and concealment of secrets in a religion, the more truth there is, and the truer the religion is.[35]

Because then the power, sovereignity, dignity and morality of its believers would increase. Secrecy constitutes the root, and the stronger the root, the better the flowering is. Any person who keeps his own secrets will feel eternal bliss in his heart.

Taqīya has, of course, always been a traditional policy for most thinkers in the Islamic world, and especially widely practiced among

Persian Muslims who feared persectuion and excommunication by the religious and the political authorities. In the eyes of its practioners, dissimulation of one's true beliefs was never considered to be inconsistent with their search for truth, to which they devoted their lifetime, nor with their respect for honesty and righteousness. In fact, it was no paradox, for this policy served merely as a convenient cloak that protected them from the stormy fury of the fanatics and kept them free to pursue their task in peace. After the Bab's execution and following the bloody massacre of his faithful disciples, there was no choice left to the surviving sympathizers and converts but to accept this time-honored safeguard policy. Hence, taqīya became the order du jour for the Azali Babis. Though it does not appear in Mīrzā ʿAlī Muhammad's Bayan, it is no surprise to us to see it figuring in Hasht Bihisht as a primary virtue, in fact as a religious duty.

Not content with a mere praise of taqīya, the author further pursues the matter by speaking in highest terms of Freemasonry. He draws a parallel between this efficient system and the Muslim religious brotherhood, tarīqat, which he claims never managed to keep its secrets intact and was therefore responsible for its own destruction.[36]

Taking the Masonic system as a model, though erroneously attributing it to the Bayan, he establishes four hierarchical orders

to the concept of secrecy:

> Number four is concealed to such a degree, that it is even unknown to the master (sāhib-i sirr)himself. It is the secret of all secrets. It is known by everyone in its most simple form, yet has reached the realm of the forgotten, since there is no science to study it (ʿilm bi ʿilm-i khud nadārad).
>
> Number three knows the secret, yet does not have the power to reveal it.
>
> Number two has the power to reveal it, yet is forced to conceal it.
>
> Number one could be revealed to the right people.[37]

To the reader this paragraph seems reminiscent of both the Masonic system of secret cells with anonymous leaders, and the traditional Muslim concept of esoteric knowledge, revealed to the few chosen ones. On the other hand, it also shows the writer as a person who likes to surround himself with an air of mystery and high secrecy not only as a security measure, but also as a thrilling sensation of adventure and social importance. We are very well aware of Kirmānī's seriousness of thought and scholarship, and we have no wish to underestimate him. Yet we are also aware of another side of his personality which indicates a great thirst for action, a deep sense for the dramatic, and a romantic attachment for heroism. We shall follow up this idea in a subsequent chapter. Let us now resume the discussion of morality.

The fourth virtue is perfection (kamāl). All goodness and beauty is attributed to perfection, just as all evil and ugliness is attributed to deficiencies.[38]

The fifth is justice (ʿadl) and moderation (iʿtidāl). Moderation is a product of reason and wisdom; and justice is an attribute of God. The Bayan is based on moderation, for unlike other religions, intransigence and intolerance are not its attributes. Before the appearance of the Bayan true moderation did not exist in this world, and the learned men presumed its existence to be impossible. As it establishes justices and accords rights to all, injustice, corruption and deficiency would disappear from the surface of the globe. For the first act of justice is to abolish evil and all deficiencies, and to pursue perfection and goodness.[39*]

The sixth virtue is cleanliness of the body and the soul, a necessary condition for achieving perfection.

The seventh is freedom, which is very closely linked to knowledge and education. As long as man lives in dark ignorance, he will be filled with great terror and alarm and will be subject to panic, for fear is the consequence of ignorance; and ignorance is the worst

* This is, of course, a perfect expose of the messianic belief.

crime on earth. But if man is enlightened by knowledge, fear will vanish from his soul, and his heart will be full of joy, trust and security. And then man can act in freedom and liberty. True freedom allows no one to interfere with another person's life, and makes man know his own personal limit. As long as men do not enjoy freedom of thought and action, true religion and faith cannot come about, and just laws cannot be executed. Freedom does not mean that man has the power to indulge his bodily pleasures and desires, abiding by no law, obeying no shari'at and no religion. Freedom does not mean acquiring great wealth, power and sovereignity. For people who possess these things, besides being enemies of freedom, are themselves prisoners of their own pleasures and lust. Freedom means liberty of action and worship, means following the path of God which is rational. The more man fears God, the freer he is.[40]

Following these seven primary virtues are nineteen secondary virtues. They are, briefly: reason, to bring law and order in a chaotic universe and to establish truth; munificence with oneself and others; chastity; courage; asceticism; patience, quest; contentment; loftiness of purpose, in the sense that man always should have in mind a worthy goal to reach (man's progress and improvement is relative to the degree of his own ambition); generosity; trust; enlightened intelligence, for man must always be informed of the new

sciences, new studies, new progress; compassion; thoughtfulness; and repentance.[41]

On Household Management and Family Relations

This chapter essentially discusses matters concerning food, clothing, and housing, as well as family relations. These seemingly trivial subjects were in fact of great importance to the Bab, who devoted a relatively long portion for their explanation in the Bayan. Hasht Bihisht took up the task of furnishing the details, claiming that:

> Previous sharāyiʿ have neglected this aspect of religion, for they were not willing to help all things and beings to reach their most perfect state. It is only now, with the revelation of the Bayan, that the task of changing the world of bodies (ʿālam-i ajsām) into the world of souls (ʿālam-i arvāh) was taken up to refine figures to such a degree that they would emanate light, and that it would be simply impossible to differentiate them from the souls.[42]

It is thus of prime importance for holy books to instruct the believers on the right and useful kind of food to eat, clothes to wear, and homes to live in.

Food constitutes the basis for moral character, pure body and soul, sound mind. For the finer the food one eats, the finer and shinier the body gets. A fine body breeds a fine mind and soul, while wrong and unclean food spoils the body which then rots quickly.[43] The essential basic food should be fine fruit, pure honey, sugar,

dairies, fragrant herbs and extracted essences such as: cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, tea, roses, safron, and the like; meat of fine poultry; cereals and rice. One has to keep away from malodorous, heavy and spoiled stuff such as: onion, garlic, smoked meats. Tobacco, opium and alcoholic beverages are also strictly forbidden.[44] A list of recommended food is finally given, somewhat similar to our own contemporary doctor's "health food" list.[45]

The finest, most beautiful, most colorful clothings are allowed, for men must be as magnificent looking as God has described the people of the paradise to be. All glittering ornaments, jewels and precious stones, diamonds, rubies, pearls are highly recommended. Clothes should be made out of the softest material, velvet, lace, silk. With the contact of silk, for instance, "the body always softly and smoothly glows and emanates warmth",[46] and becomes a source of energy and pure joy. It also prevents the body from decaying and keeps the temperature even at all weathers. For the touch, as well as colors, fragrance, sound, and all senses possess nutritive qualities for the body and soul.

Individual homes should be full of light, flowers, and fine furniture, such as chairs, sofas, beds; types of furniture which are not common in the traditional Persian homes. It is also especially

recommended to sit on chairs and "elevated seats" because it is more profitable to the body and soul than to sit on the floor.[47] Decorations should be lavishly used: mirrors reflecting and emanating light, statues, paintings, vases, blooming gardens and limpid pools. The air should always be purified and delicately perfumed with incenses. Food and beverages should be served on decorative plates made out of precious metals like gold, silver, crystal, for

> undoubtedly eating and drinking out of such wares will have excellent results and effects, such as: gladdening and strengthening the heart, refining and improving the soul...preserving life, breeding good health, prolonging youth.[48]

Cheap wares had quite the opposite effect. Tinware, for instance, could be hazardous to the health.

Music, the language of the heart (lisān-i qalb) is an essential part of life and is sanctified by the Bayan.[49]

All this is described in elaborate, often tediously repetitive details. The author's fancy is let loose while writing about the most fabulous castles and gems, the most beautiful people wearing the most delicate, glittering garments. These are households of the beautiful and wealthy, where ugliness and poverty are banished. It is like the dreamland of a fairy tale where everything is possible. The author does admit that such duties apply only to people who can

provide themselves with such things and not to those who do not have the means. Yet he does not offer any alternative for those who cannot afford such luxuries. He simply mentions that the Bayan forbids living in dark, dirty houses, since light is the symbol of purity and darkness of impurity.[50] Then he promises:

> One should not think that such conditions are difficult or impossible to bring about. For the discoveries and inventions of the present age and human effort will soon make all these easily available and inexpensive.[51]

It is therefore the ideal land of the future, the promised paradise, that he is describing here. He comes back to reality when he condemns the Persian ulama's clothes as being unfit for the climate of Iran; the Persian public baths for their dirt and unhygienic conditions; and when he forbids riding donkeys, foul language, indecent pictures, ... in short anything that is ugly and unclean.

The last part of the chapter concerns personal relations. It commands love and affection for one's kin and relatives, respect and obedience for the elders; friendship to one's peers in age; solicitude and care for the younger; good treatment for the hired servants; respect for one's enemies and for those who do not follow the Bayan, though one should not get too close to the latter, since they do not share the truth. Self-sacrifice should be practiced for the common interest of all.[52]

On Civil Duties and Political Affairs

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part One enumerates the duties to be performed by the governed. Part Two states the important responsibilities and obligations of the secular government.

Part One. The ordinances mentioned here, nineteen in number, correspond exactly to similar commands found in the Bayan. Here, too, however, as we have already observed in the previous sections, Hasht Bihisht introduces a system and a number of ideas peculiar to the authors themselves and foreign to the Bab's thought. The implications and significance of these particular novelties are quite revealing.

1. It is man's duty to use all the power he can dispose of to help things reach their not yet complete perfection, because the true, promised heaven is possible within the world of body. The Bayan stated that each thing attains its own paradise by attaining its utmost perfection.

2. No one has the right to bother another man. This rule establishes full equality to all by granting freedom of religion, writing, language, business, clothing, housing, marriage, property, mores and customs, and nationality. Freedom of religion is allowed in order not to force conversion against

anyone's will and against anyone's understanding. There should be no hatred, no excommunication.

3. It is everyone's duty to build his house according to the plan and system of the heavenly castles. Elaborate details of architecture, furniture, gardening are given at unnecessary length and repetition of the previous chapter.

4. Let there be light everywhere, in cities, mountains, deserts, seas, be it night or day, so that darkness vanishes forever from this world. For light is the source of life, energy, health, and modern living comfort. It greatly encourages the use of electricity.

5. It strongly promotes the equality of men and women. For women are as important members of the society as men, and they should therefore not be discriminated against. Their seclusion from public life and from men's eyes has been the major cause of corruption in the human world. This "fine sex" (jins-i latīf) provides a child's first education, governs the entire household affairs, is the source of all human progress and achievements. Yet, because of the unfair treatment men have given them, they remained culturally backward. It is a fact that

> the human world will never reach its highest stage of perfection unless women equally share with men all rights and privileges.[54]

Women are endowed with nobler and more humane qualities than men. They are truly capable of mercy, finesse, affection. Such an exaltation of women somewhat surpasses the Bab's intentions. Although he called for their emancipation, his liberating reforms are far more conservative. Thus he allowed them to mix freely only with men who are members of their family, or who were brought up in the same family. Even then there is some restriction, as he recommends men's and women's conversation to be fruitful and short, twenty-eight words long, to be precise.[55] He also specifically reduced women's role to providing "contentment to their husbands, and love to their children".[56]

6. Foul language is forbidden. Purity of the language is as important to the soul as purity of the body.

7. The sacred words of the Bayan should be written in beautiful handwriting and eloquently read aloud.

8. Thoughts should always be lofty and noble.

9. Pity and self-pity are forbidden.

10. Printing and the circulation of books should be widespread. Here, too, Hasht Bihisht further enhances modern tools and means which are not mentioned in the Bayan: telegraph, post, telephone, air balloons, photographic instruments. It quotes a French book, Le monde comme il va, which predicts the unification of the world thanks to the improved means of communication.[57]

11. Before enunciating the ordinance concerning housing, the authors first launch into a lengthy historical analysis of the growth of human society and civilization, stating theories and generalities which, of course, are not to be found in the Bayan.

Human beings, they write, were at the origin of time scattered all over the jungles, living like wild animals, eating plants and fruits from trees. Slowly they began to conglomerate and to form various tribes, adopting a nomadic way of life. At that stage their chief rules concerned the protection of their kin, the strengthening of blood ties, and respect for their guests. They then gradually reached the sedentary stage of village and agricultural life, and of worshipping idols such as cows, fire, trees, water,... Love of the fatherland was then essential for their self-preservation. Their growing needs pushed them to organize a more elaborate social life which then necessitated laws and a

government to execute them. This was the starting point of human civilization. The following stage saw the establishment of societies where each individual member sacrificed his own personal interests for the general interest of the whole. Sciences, technology and the arts had then developed to such a degree that people became aware of their own vital rights. They in turn began to organize their own power to oppose the power of the government. Strong, equal and just laws were enacted which checked the power of the government. The latter in turn had to supervise the correct and fair execution of those laws. Thus the power of each individual was equal to the total power of all the people. The great European nations have already reached that stage of civilized human life. A higher standard of living has not yet appeared nor has it been conceived by anyone. Yet, on the other hand, we must be aware of the fact that sophisticated civilizations could also be detrimental to human beings because they could bring corruption, moral and physical degeneration, and weakening of the national strength. World history has taught us that civilized nations, when reaching their most perfect stage, declined rapidly and fell prey to great calamities of which they themselves were responsible, whereas the simplicity and modesty of village and tribal life are full of natural pleasures and delights, youthful and strengthening qualities all unknown to the

more sophisticated city dwellers.

The Bayan, the authors write, attempts to prevent the occurrence of such defects and disadvantages and to attract the qualities and benefits by commanding the population of the globe to "assemble and yet spread out". This means people should dwell in houses exactly planned by the Bayan in the following manner: houses should be equally distributed over the surface of the earth in such a manner as to allow them to be distant one from the other, yet assembled. All lands should be divided into lots, one for each big family. In the middle of the lot tall buildings should be erected to house 90 to 100 members of a family, very similar to apartment buildings in Europe. The surrounding lot should be reserved for the cultivation of gardens and fields to provide the necessary provisions. The advantages of living in such master planned locations are tremendous. It modernizes yet keeps the flavor of peasant life. It assembles people yet preserves them from the dirt and the noise of crowds. It enables the inhabitants to establish the ideal Platonic city. It facilitates the interaction of all human beings and prevents crime and corruption.[58]

The writers here display a fair knowledge of eighteenth and nineteenth century European sociological and political theories.

They seem to have been acquainted with Rousseau's idea of society growing out of men's need of one another in their daily struggle for subsistence, and with his social contract theory; with Montesquieu's concept of law that would protect the individual's rights against the absolute power of a government; with the community organization and utopian projects of the early socialist theories. The belief that urban civilization could corrupt and ruin a nation is probably taken from Ibn Khaldun.

It is interesting to observe here that they speak in terms of people's power, and not of a religious power, to check the government power. Carried away as they were with their subject, they seem to have momentarily forgotten the original Babi purpose of their treatise. Consequently this whole section should not be attributed to Babism, but to the authors' ideology.

12. The Bayan commands each of the faithful to keep record of his daily activities and thoughts in a diary in order for him to follow the gradual progress of his personality and to evaluate his good and bad deeds. Thus one can carefully guide one's life, learning from one's past not to waste one's time, and to be occupied with meaningful work. Here Kirmānī adds his own comment which shows us his great concern for the study of history as a true

science, following modern methodology. He surmises that such diaries would also serve as profitable sources for future study of human behavior. For individual biographies are the basis for national histories. And history is the foundation of political sciences. Future historians will have at their disposal not just a few scattered individual documents, but a wealth of information concerning all people from all classes and of all kinds. Their study would therefore be a sound, well investigated history of people in general, and not of particular individuals alone.[59]

13. All the Bayan's laws and ordinances aim at achieving unity. For unity is the highest, most perfect state of Existence. At this point we come across the authors' national sentiment for the first time. They claim, erroneously, that the Bayan commands each of the faithful to learn one language, besides the mother tongue, that should be common to all. This common language should be Persian mixed with Arabic, for it would be the finest and most beautiful of all oriental and western languages. It combines the best Aryan language with the most beautiful semitic words, a combination that would provide musicality, rich vocabulary and likely modes of expression. In fact, this language should not be restricted to Persians and Arabs alone. It should become the scientific and literary language of all nations. It should

therefore be an obligatory language to be studied by all mankind.[60]

The Bayan speaks of unity in terms of the universal belief in the oneness of God; in the oneness of His word and His truth which He has revealed to mankind at various stages of manifestation through a series of successive prophets; in terms of the hope that in the future all people will be united in Paradise after having followed the rightful and straight, divine path, and obeyed God's commands. It is characteristic of Kirmānī to interpret this concept of unity in a secular sense. His hope, his wish is not for a celestial paradise, but for a living world on this earth where all human beings are united, equally sharing all in common. His patriotic zeal moved him to suggest his own national language as the best in the world to be adopted by mankind.

14. After finishing with school education every person should freely and according to his talent learn and acquire a skill in any field of arts, sciences, or technology, in order to earn his living and to contribute to the progress of mankind. For labor is a holy duty and no one is exempted from it.

15. All charitable and religious affairs should be organized and ruled

according to strict laws and orderly elected assembly. Thus the execution of the Bayan's commands concerning schools, industrial training centers, hospitals, treasury,...is insured.

No such ordinance is found in the Bayan.

16. It is the duty of all individuals, rich or poor, to marry early. The number of marriages allowed to each person is, according to Hasht Bihisht, nineteen, but only for those who can afford the expenses. The cost of the first marriage is paid for by the community treasury (bayt ul māl), the rest are the individual's own responsibility. The expenses of the first one are taken care of in order to encourage marriage. The age limit is eleven for both sexes. However, pre-marital relationships lasting at least a couple of years are compulsory.[61] The Bayan limits the number of marriages to only two, the second one being allowed only with the consent of the first spouse, and only in case of impotence or sterility of either partner.[62] There is no question of pre-marital relationships, nor is there a bayt ul māl financing marriages.

17. Children should be separated at birth from their mothers and put in special nurseries run by highly qualified and educated women

specializing in child education. Their entire education should be in the hands of experts, until they reach the age of maturity. There should therefore be a "factory of children" that produces well educated, good mannered adults out of babies, just as there are factories producing wool out of sheepskin. The only difference being that the former is a "human factory".[63]

This, of course, is a concept totally alien to the Bab, to Babism and even to "Azalism". Once more we are reminded of the early European socialists' utopia.

18. Everything must be organized and put under a strict order, and whatever fails to abide by this rule must be abolished. For this order (nizām) is the true meaning of civilization, of justice and of moderation. This is the law that overrules the power of any government, be it despotic, constitutional, semi-constitutional, or republican. The writing of a book of rules (nizām-nāma) is therefore indispensable. The rules of the Bayan concern all aspects of life. They are the most honorable of all laws. It serves the cause of humanity and progress of the world. It must rule over all nations, for it breeds a culture superior to all cultures. Other sharāyi' have given birth to cultures that do not deserve to be called so, for its followers hide under a respectable

cultural coat nature that is as barbarian, as savage as the most primitive people. In the name of culture they have conquered weaker nations by force, have subjugated millions of souls, and still keep on threatening other nations with their insatiable greed, helped by the war weapons manufactured by Krupp and his like.[64]

Thus spoke Kirmānī! The Bab commands that mankind be ruled by a sharī'at. Our author argues that the Bayan is the best law, and at the same time he violently attacks the colonial policies of the European powers. Furthermore he holds the West directly responsible for the decline of the Ottoman Empire, not because of its political and economical encroachment, but because of its evil influence upon Istanbul's notable citizens and statesmen:

> They [notables and statesmen] have given up their sense of patriotism, declared all their religious beliefs to be sheer nonsense, and claimed that imitation of the West, in all aspects of life is the only path for them to follow.[65]

Kirmānī goes on arguing that the human nature basically needs three feelings: to believe, to fear and to understand. Religion, kingship and philosophy take care of these needs. Belief is necessary for "mystique" (in transliterated French) matters, abstractions, wonders hard to explain, such as: hell, heaven, angels, and the like. To understand is for the pure minds capable of explaining those matters and get the meaning,

advantages, disadvantages of all things. Fear is for the primitive, ignorant souls, incapable of understanding. As long as people live in a primitive stage of ignorance, they are ready to believe and to fear. They only lack the power to understand. As soon as they reach a more civilized stage, their faculty to understand increases as their ability to believe and to fear weakens. However, there lies the great danger, for this might breed corruption, which is a worse stage than primitive ignorance:

> Be it understood by all, that if understanding reaches perfection, it is necessarily accompanied by belief and fear.[66]

For truth cannot be revealed without simultaneously inspiring faith and fear in man's heart.

Here the authors make a distinction between two kinds of sciences: the deficient (ʿilm-i nāqis) and the true (ʿilm-i haqīqī). People who possess the former type are ignorant and narrow-minded, for they deny the validity of religion and the holy books of the prophets. They are corrupt and corrupting. Thus he condemns the scientists and philosophers who choose to dismiss religion as superstition, mentioning names of French philosophers like Jean Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire. They and other like them, in the name of enlightenment and rationalism, have corrupted the French nation's character; caused wars and

revolutions; confused the simple minds of the common people by encouraging them to disobey their sovereigns and to call for liberty, equality, free-thinking. They gave rise to destructive movements such as the nihilist, socialist, radical, anarchist.[67] Strangely enough, Kirmānī attacks the very thinkers from whom he borrowed so many of his ideas, and without whom he would not have been able to draw his own program for the Persian Babi utopia. We shall see later that in his other, non-Babi works he will have nothing but praise for them and their movements.

He concludes his argument here by asserting that only the ʿilm-i haqīqī brings to light the truth of all matters, the knowledge of all things. When that stage is reached, and only then, one can do without fear and belief, for then all people are enlightened with true knowledge, certainty and wisdom, and no one is left in the darkness of ignorance. This state, however, is not possible unless the holy ordinances of the Bayan are executed.[68]

19. Man must constantly evolve toward higher perfection. For perfectibility has no end, and the human race is capable of progress, of reform, and of education. It is this belief that moves the nation toward greater achievements and progress.[69]

This is a confession of faith in man and his self-improving ability. It is a humanist characteristic of Kirmānī and of the Bab as expressed in the Bayan.

Part Two. Government and politics are discussed in seven main sections.

1. The Bayan forbids the despotic rule of any kind. For such government will fail to abide by the religious precepts and holy laws, and will have unchecked power over the population which would be deprived of its basic freedom and human rights. Such a rule could occur in nations where the mass is blind and ignorant of its own rights, living in "fanatical darkness", discontent and unhappy. Despotism would thus lead to the enslavement of the nation, unless some enlightened leaders rise from among them and "with the power of speech and the force of the pen" awaken them. Consequently, their anger and resentment would be aroused, and put into action. Bloody revolutions will follow. Such conditions, warns the author, are frowned upon because they lead nowhere but to chaos, violence, and national destruction, since they work against the human ideal of freedom and equality.

On the other hand, a republican regime is also forbidden.

Several reasons are given here:

(a) With the republican government, the power of the state would decrease considerably, and national representatives would acquire a sovereign power unchecked by any existing strong opposition. However, true justice and moderation cannot be established unless two opposing powers confront one another at all times.

> In order to maintain justice, there must always exist two powers, of the state and of the nation, in opposition yet equal.[70]

(b) The power struggle arising among the elected representatives, out of their own respective conflicting interest, could be destructive because pluralism brings only chaos.

(c) It is impossible to find among the population a man full of integrity and courage, endowed with the most perfect virtues, to qualify for the office of the president of the republic.

What is the solution then? Kirmānī's solution lies with Aristotle and Plato's combined concept of sovereignty. It is monarchical and divine. The legitimate kind is a man endowed by birth with all qualities; spiritually, morally and physically superior to all men; a kind of enlightened philosopher-king ruling by divine right.

He combines all the advantages of despotic and of republican rules and avoids the defects of both. He would rule according to the holy sharī'at, sharing his duties with an assembly, which he personally would appoint. It is with such political conditions that a nation can achieve peace, security, justice, and prosperity. Only then true paradise will appear on earth and universal happiness will reign. For God has promised mankind to fill the earth with justice, heavenly bliss and happiness on the day of such a true sovereign's reign.[71]

We have not been able to find any comparable political ideas in the Bayan. It is very plausible that the Bab would have condemned despotic rule, and would have promoted the traditional Muslim concept of a sovereign, who is both the religious and political head of the community and whose government abides by the holy ordinances. The Bayan states that it is the prophet of God who is the righteous leader. During his absence, the secular ruler must prepare his people for his eventual appearance. The political qualifications and functions of the ruler are not discussed. As for the expected messenger of God, only his divine attributes and functions are mentioned.

We may presume, however, that Kirmānī's source of inspiration

was, besides being the Muslim theocratic idea, ancient Greek political thought. Not only does he often refer to Plato and Aristotle by name, but the picture he draws of the ideal human community corresponds to the Platonic idea.

Finally, it is interesting to observe here that in spite of his humanist faith in man, he displays an aristocratic distaste for the multitude by attacking pluralism and republicanism. Yet, his remark that it is necessary for a healthy government to face a strong opposition reveals confidence in the democratic system. It is unfortunate for us that he made no attempt to further develop his political views.

2. It is the sovereign's sacred duty to establish true civilization and heavenly order among mankind, and to grant his subjects complete freedom of action, justice, moderation, and security. Civilization and progress are possible only when men live in a society, and when they unite their individual forces into one strong, powerful, common force. "Civilization is essential to human beings. It is the true attribute of man."[72] When all members of a society are ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their fellowman and nation, when trust, love and honor are upheld, the ideal Platonic city would come about (madīna-yi,

fāzila-yi- iflātūnīya).[73]

3. Sovereigns are forbidden to deal with war weapons, are ordered to prevent their manufacturing and to outlaw their sale. For his duty is to establish peace and to abolish war.

The Bayan does in fact forbid anyone to carry arms because it condemns violence. Yet, it allows its manufacturing, and allows its use in case of holy war (jihād).[74] Kirmānī, however, interprets this ordinance in his own personal way. Man, he says, was originally born wild and aggressive. With the growth of civilization, his natural belligerent instinct slowly gave way to a vital need for peace and security. This need moved him to produce weapons, organize military forces, and plan his own self-defense. He thus succeeded in protecting himself from internal chaos and external aggression. Hence peace and security reigned as weapons increased. At present, sovereigns are concentrating all their energies on building up their armed forces. The inevitable consequence of such a state of affairs would be world armament, not for war though, for no nation would dare to start off the first fire, but as a security measure. This in turn would lead to the much desired objective: world disarmament. Then mankind will have reached the age of maturity, having

overcome its juvenile, unstable, irrational stage. Enlightened knowledge and humanism would from then on replace fear and brutal force.[75]

Once more we observe in Kirmānī the same faith in man, the same confidence in the voice of reason. We also detect in him an unshaken belief, so characteristic of all humanists, that eventually good will transcend evil. The good people will be rewarded and the bad ones punished.

> History shows us how oppressors have always been defeated at the end. For no nation has ever been able to progress without good thoughts, good deeds and knowledge of truth. It is thanks to the piousness, harmlessness and great suffering of the Apostles that Christianity progressed to such a degree that thirty-five nations presently fly the banner of the Gospel. And it is due to the oppression and the cheating of the Muslim Caliphs that Islam never attended its natural highest stage of perfection. The Muslims have consequently been suffering so many calamities and miseries ever since.[76]

4. The Bayan, and Kirmānī, command the killing of all abnegators and enemies of Babism. "For the Bayan's rules concern humanity in general and their execution depends on the obedience of the entire world population.... Thus anyone who denies those commands threatens to corrupt and ruin the world. It is therefore, for the sake of mankind, a sacred duty to have him eliminated."[77]

Curiously, Kirmānī is not aware of the contradiction inherent in this ordinance. Has he not previously praised the Bayan for its tolerance and clemency?

5. The geographical regions that should rightfully belong to the ahl-i Bayan are the following: (a) Fars, including the Arab Iraq; (b) Azerbaijan, including Anatolia and Transcaucasia; (c) Khorasan, including Kirman and Sistan; (d) Mazandaran, including all of the Caspian Sea provinces; (e) regions comprising Isfahan, Hamedan, Tehran, Kashan, Qazvin; (f) Rumelia, including Greece, Bulgaria and Istanbul; (g) Holy lands of Mossul, Aleppo, Damascus, Lebanon, Tripoli, Baalbeck, Beirut; (h) all Mediterranean islands and coasts. The Bayan mentions only the two Iraqs, Azerbaijan, Khorasan, Mazandaran.[78]

All the faithful are commanded to settle in one of these provinces. Non-believers are absolutely forbidden to live there until the time comes when the whole world will follow the Bayan. Then the world will become one nation with one common language and common alphabet for all. Then one can live anywhere one wishes. Travelling from one corner of the globe to the other will be easy, hence broadening each individual's horizon. One would feel at home anywhere, everywhere.[79]

6. It is the sovereign's duty to build mausoleums that should be the tallest, most beautiful, most ornamented buildings to be used as sanctuaries for government refugees and criminals. By this, however, the traditional Persian custom of bast is not meant. These mausoleums should function as rehabilitating centers where the criminals will be reformed and educated, "their souls purified", and thus turned into responsible and pious citizens. Men commit crimes because of their various personal and social circumstances and not because they are born criminals. In the mausoleums they will be given the right opportunities and correct education to learn to follow the path of God. They would reform gladly and willingly. Forced imprisonment is forbidden.[80]

The Bayan, in fact, denies anyone the right to imprison, for God does not wish to see prisons established anywhere.[81] The Bayan does not discuss such institutions.

7. Sovereigns should establish in each province an assembly of elected representatives whose function would be to manage local domestic problems.[82] This idea, too, is not to be found in the Bayan.

On Public Duties

This chapter essentially states the Bab's laws and ordinances concerning such public matters as: marriage, divorce, funeral, inheritance,... It provides definite rules on the way to divide a legacy among the heirs; discusses the dowry in case of marriage or divorce; elaborates the details of the funeral ceremony--all in conformity with the Bayan's precepts. The only topic that we find relevant to our present study deals with the meaning of death, of body and soul. Here we observe a similar curious mélange of Babi and modern Western thoughts as noted in the preceding sections.

Quoting Darwin, the authors set out to account for the origin of man in terms of the evolutionary theory, surmising that he first existed in the shape of the basest kind of animal, namely as a worm. He slowly acquired then, with the effect of his physical environment, his reason, and education, a human shape. It has been scientifically proven, the writers claim, that the animals' progress of transformation will proceed until time comes when they will attain their most perfect form. For, although some animals degenerate to lower kinds, and some vanish totally from the surface of the earth, generally all species move toward higher perfection and progress. Similarly, man, who underwent a comparable transformation throughout the ages, will eventually reach his most perfect form and develop wings that

will permit him to fly from one planet to the other.

> For this is the essential motion whereby accidental bodies are transformed into real bodies, that is to say the unclean, worldly bodies change into fine, other-worldly bodies.[83]

Modern inventions and discoveries will help make these bodies better, finer bodies; this world a brigher, more beautiful world; and these dark ignorant souls more enlightened, more learned souls. Reason will guide all to true knowledge. Then all individuals will reach complete finesse, purity and holiness. Their existence will be the source of all lights and the origin of all perfections and virtues. This process will, of course, take centuries.[84]

The authors hasten to admit here that the real bird is not the bird we see with our eyes, just as the trees and plants are not those we see. In fact, birds, trees, and plants are something else which has not yet been brought to light. For their matter is incorporeal, spiritual. Only in the imaginary world can we feel the ideal human shape with its holy wings. Hence the ideal world of the future is first conceived in the world of imagination.

This ideal world of the future, they argue, is the particular one man will reach after having passed successfully through his most perfect stage in the world of bodies. This is the true meaning of death. Death is not what the Muslims and Christians believe it to

mean. It is not going from one world to another. It is escaping from the level of dirt and oppression to the level of life and refinement and light. Thus death in reality means progress and attainment of existential perfection.[85]

After "death" the body and soul will be united and eternal life will start. Since it has been asserted that the human soul, and its reality, are words (kalama) and nothing else, and since words have reached their indefinite stage, indefinite souls will be "created under their shadow".[86] Similarly, following the progressive notion of perfectibility, the earthly lights will be connected to the celestial lights. These eternal rays will lift the darkness from above the atmosphere between heaven and earth. Thus all the other planets will be lit and their inhabitants, also progressing toward higher perfection, will get closer to the planet earth, till time comes when all planets will be linked together.[87]

The Bab believed that all creatures and things on earth are endowed with the power of perfectibility. Yet he had by no means developed such ideas concerning death and the shape of the future world. In fact, his concept of body and souls is identical to the conventional religious interpretation of the material body and the immaterial soul and of the separation of the two after death.

Such an "original", to say the least, theory as exposed above is therefore somewhat puzzling to us. It is difficult to know whether the writers meant the readers to take their views literally or figuratively. What seems to us most obvious is that this theory, in an ingenious way, connects Darwin's evolution thesis to the Muslim mystic's concept of soul, life and death. The result of this most astonishing fusion of ideas borrowed from the natural sciences of the West and philosophical mysticism of the East is sheer fantasy.

On Spiritual Laws and Various Fields of Studies

The authors claim that any science has both a theoretical and a practical aspect--one being the abstract, spiritual, and the other being the concrete, material.

The "science of unity" (ʿilm al-tawhīd), for instance, is a "superior philosophy, the point and origin of all sciences and knowledge, the truth of all things...." Its subject is Absolute Existence and all attributes connected to it, such as: unity, truth, love, life, motion, light, finesse, perfection. It is thus connected with theology (in Latin in the text) since it deals with divine attributes. It is also related to philosophy since the latter is the science discoverer of all truths. The practical aspect of ʿilm-i tawhīd is jurisprudence (fiqh); and the theoretical aspect is philosophy and theology. The Bayan,

state the authors, does not distinguish between the practice and the theory and has united all spiritual, abstract and material, concrete matters, unlike other religions, which have differentiated one from the other and wrongly limited theology to the study of concept and terminology and to fruitless, useless research.[88]

A similar distinction is made with the study of the origin of man (takvīn) and the study of the creation of religion (tashrī'), both respectively being the practical and theoretical aspect of the science of explanation ('ilm-i ta'vīl). The man who deals with the former is a philosopher, whereas the man who knows the latter is a prophet or saint.[89]

Then a list of the remaining important sciences is given, mainly constituting: study of names of individuals; study of letters (hurūf); study of the property of letters; study of the relation and composition of letters; study of past centuries, which includes history, geography, geology and all natural sciences; study of the natural order. The definition and description of these studies, except for the "study of past centuries", are complicated and highly abstract, and irrelevant for the purpose of our analysis.

The authors finally conclude that: (1) any science that does not

agree with the principles of the Bayan, or with the concept of unity (tawhīd) has to be eliminated. For one should attempt to reconcile all sciences and practices with the precepts of the Bayan, so that they do not conflict with the real order and with the divine nature. (2) One should acquire a thorough knowledge of all religions, holy books and laws, all philosophies, all thoughts of "people like Mullah Sadrā and Shaykh Ahmad Ahsā'ī". For only with such a learned background can one appreciate and gain something from the Bayan's precepts. (3) The refutation or acceptance of the Bayan by anyone should be reached through understanding and evaluation of all proofs given.

> The religion of the Bayan, which is from the beginning to the end, scientific and philosophical, accepts the belief and attestation reached only through complete understanding of its message.[90]

Therefore the Bayan commands the destruction of all books that do not abide by its holy laws and principles. For it aims at abolishing discord and conflict, and at uniting all sciences and knowledge, arts and crafts. This command logically follows the previously mentioned command to kill all dissenters of the Bayan. The ultimate goal being the creation of a united, harmonious, homogeneous world.[91]

On the Day of Judgement (qiyāmat)

This chapter is divided into two main sections--one explaining the meaning of qiyāmat, the other discussing prophecy, the expected

Imam, the legitimacy of the Bab.

Part One. Here Kirmānī first describes in detail the advent of the Day of Judgement and the appearance of the Mahdi in a strictly theological fashion. Then he sets up to interpret the meaning of this event in historical terms.

He writes, on the Day of Judgement all things will return to God. The true meaning of resurrection is that all souls and bodies will return to their origin. Hence origin and resurrection are two identical terms. On that day, which is also the Day of Separation, the "people of the right" will be separated from the "people of the left", the people of light from the people of fire. On that day also we shall witness a brightening of our sight, the eclipse of the moon, and the union of the moon and the sun. The brightening of the sight means that the secrets will be unveiled; the eclipse of the moon means the overthrow of the ulama with the rise of the sun of the truth; the reunion of moon and sun means on the one hand, the "conjunction of that luminary with the useful people", and on the other hand, the reunion of the power of prophecy with the power of philosophy.[92] On that day also the evil angels will call people and will obstruct their ears with "cotton of ignorance" in order to prevent them from hearing the call of the good angels. Thus, the pious will experience a great shock, and their

beliefs will be shaken as if by a great earthquake. That day will also see the appearance of the "qā'im of the House of Muhammad", that is the Twelfth Hidden Imam.

On that day rain will fall, like semen falling on rotten bones, to prepare the dead bodies for the sound of the blowing trumpet. The souls will then arise in their earthly bodies from their tombs. They will all assemble at the "open space of the judgement". The sun will be high upon their heads; the perishable stars will fall; the fearful sky will be contorted. The people of fire and the people of heaven will eternally remain in their respective assigned place. Then the sky will split open, and the true great, heavenly kingdom will appear. "The angels will spread books and relate the news."[93]

These events will occur in exactly three stages: the pre-appearance stage, the appearance stage, and the post-appearance stage.

The pre-appearance stage marks the reign of blasphemy, corruption and darkness, for Islam and all religious beliefs will be weak and their leaders corrupt. Tribes and nations will violently clash on matters of religion. People will cease to abide by the law. Tremendous uproars will disturb the world. The sun will rise from the west. Strange diseases will attack the population. At that point,

Kirmānī argues that each event possesses two meanings, one spiritual, the other physical. Thus "the sun rising from the west" physically means the appearance of the lights of science, knowledge, and philosophy from the Western part of the world. "For in our present age it is from there that the sun of culture and education rises."[94] He uses a Hadith predicting the appearance of the Imposter riding a monstrous four-legged ass before the advent of the Twelfth Imam (dajal va khar-i dajjāl) to further illustrate his main point. One has to know, says he, that the existence of such a four-legged ass is impossible. What is probably meant by the four-legged ass (khar-i chahārpā) is that ass-king (khar-i pādishāh) and the imposter, in our present age, is that Hājjī Mīrzā Āqāsi, who killed the honorable Qā'im Maqām.[95]

Thus the author, with the help of a brilliant pun, compares Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah to an ass, and the Minister Āqāsī, responsible for the murder of a predecessor called Qā'im Maqām, who was famous for his liberal reforms, to the imposter who took the place of the true Qā'im, the Hidden Imam.

Kirmānī goes on stating that such calamities as described above must occur because then it is fitting for the divine, kind wisdom to eliminate this oppression, to destroy corruption and revolutions by "allowing the appearance of the great luminary", the holy saint, who

would fill the earth with justice". This period of time is comparable to a child in puberty. It is the stage preceding the stage of ultimate beauty and perfection.[96] There are precursors and symbolic signs that set the stage and prepare it for the eventual great happening. Such precursors are necessary to all stages at all levels. For instance, at the "level of reason" the first precursors, the first teachers, the first announcers were Shaykh Ahmad-i Ahsā'ī and Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī who acquainted people with scientific matters and philosophical expressions. At the "level of the soul" it was both the Muslim and the Christian Sufis who discovered the secrets of the earthly and the divine worlds. On the "level of the self" (nafs) there were Muslim and European philosophers, such as naturalists, materialists, freemasons, socialists, who introduced and prepared the way to philosophy. On the "level of nature" such great modern inventions as electricity, telephone, telegraph, photography, and locomotives set the stage for the execution of the Bayan's holy goals. On the "level of the body" the discovery of gas, coal, various foods and beverages, crystal and mirrors, binoculars and microscopes, means of transport on land and sea, balloons, factory machines, helped to propagate and put into practice the Bayan's holy ordinances. All these new sciences and technology have greatly served the cause of the Bayan.

> If it were not for them, the laws of the Bayan would not have been executed...for in truth they were the conditions of the qiyāmat.[97]

Thus Kirmānī obviously tries to reconcile modern sciences and technology with Babism and its holy precepts.

The second stage will witness the appearance of the expected Imam; the evaluation of all creatures; the separation of the people of the light from the people of the fire; the revelation of a new sharī'at and a new Book. The people who believed in the Mahdi and followed the rules of the divine qānūn will go to heaven. Those who did not will go to hell. The duration of the Day of Judgement is 50,000 years, for the road separating the world of bodies from the world of heaven is that long.[98]

The post-appearance stage will see the victory of the Right Religion over the entire world population; the reign of justice over the globe; the illumination and purification of the earth. Gradually then the world will move toward the heavenly kingdom. Air baloons will fly in space from planet to planet. Speedy means of transport, better roads, greater use of the seas and waterways through canals will facilitate direct communication between Eastern and Western parts of the world. Man of heaven will develop holy wings, thus attaining his most perfect human shape. Self-knowledge will be acquired by the study of one's past and present. Books will be widespread. Physical

mortality will be abolished and people of heaven will live to eternity. Many factors would contribute to immortality: purity of the air and mildness of the weather thus preventing putrification; existence of infinite light, essential to vitality and good health; purity of thought; body and soul getting more and more alike in purity, finesse and glow, because of health diet; elimination of all sorrows and worries, and prevalence of bliss and serenity; right, adequate clothing such as silk garments; destruction of germs, microbes and harmful beasts; development of science and knowledge. All these detailed accounts, claims Kirmānī, had already been mentioned in the Koran, and they must occur on this earth. Though some of these predictions have already occurred, the rest will not happen unless the holy laws and ordinances of the Bayan have been executed.[99]

Practically all of these ideas are, needless to say, foreign to the Bayan. We have chosen to relate them in lengthy detail in order to show Kirmānī's new view of the concept of qiyāmat. It is quite apparent that he chose to interpret the religious notion of heaven, that is an eternity of bliss, in historical terms. The post-qiyāmat celestial heaven he speaks about is given worldly attributes and is located on this globe. The "heavenly souls" bear their earthly bodies. The physical environment and living facilities represent the "brave new world" of the future.

Part Two. Kirmānī endeavors to prove the legitimacy of the Bab's prophecy by demonstrating that (1) Mīrza ʿAlī Muhammad is the Prophet of God, (2) his revelation is divine, and (3) he is the expected Imam of the Muslims.

Echoing the Bayan, the author surmises that the prophets are endowed with a powerful reason and an enlightened knowledge which are innate and not acquired through any formal or informal education. There lies the greatest difference between the prophet and the ordinary man, for the latter has to learn his knowledge from masters and through the effort of thinking. Ideas come naturally, spontaneously to the prophet "without his making any effort to think". Haven't most prophets been illiterate, and did they not come from among "primitive nations" in times of ignorance? One can therefore understand and fully appreciate the greatest wonder of all, the newest and most perfect manifestation.

> A young man, Persian by birth, a merchant by profession, uneducated and uninformed of the world situation, all of a sudden establishes a new law for the sake of justice and equality, a new sharīʿat which is the sum total of all sharāyiʿ and the most perfect of them all. A man endowed with such power that within an hour he could compose 500 verses consisting of holy words, sermons, scientific discourses, explanations,...[100]

The owner of such a pen, Kirmānī emphasizes, is no ordinary person who acquired his knowledge through learnings or information. His

words are new and do not resemble anyone else's words. The author of these words is God, and the Bab is His Prophet.

What is the difference between the Word of God and the word of ordinary people? Kirmānī attempts to answer this question in order to prove that the Bab's word is divine. He brings up seven main points of difference:

1. Since words are qualified by the attributes of the speaker, one can conclude that God's word is full of substance. It is in no need of anyone's attestation or acceptance, and understanding it is equal to accepting it. Even hearing it is like understanding it. This statement is in accordance with all rules of science. For philosophers have divided science into two sections: (a) conception (tassavur), that is the study of things in their essence; (b) attestation (tasdīq), that is the study of things in their existence. For each thing possesses both an essence and an existence, excepting God whose essence is identical to His existence. We can therefore say that it is pointless to speak of his essence, since essence is reached through assessment and conception of existing things. Hence the conception of God is attestation, and the essence of the divine word is its own existence itself. Thus to understand the word is to accept it. By

hearing and understanding the True Word, one immediately feels faith in one's heart, regardless of one's disposition to deny or to confess. This is one of the greatest proofs of the wonders of the True Word.

2. The True Word is created by God, and all things that are "created" within the shadow "of that Word are rational and coming from the heart". Thus anyone who joins the circle of this Bayan would immediately acquire a new soul and would utter words full of pure, clean and enlightened meaning. Men's words, however, are not rationally created.

3. The True Word, sharing the same attributes with its creator, is infinite, without beginning or end.

4. It is a new word bearing no resemblance to previous words. It is "descending from the world of invention and novelty".

5. It is poetic, devoid of artifice and ornament.

6. It is universal, whereas men's words are limited by time and space.

7. It is a word beautiful in its simplicity and easy comprehension. It is the sum total of all other words.[101]

All these "proofs" are stated in the Bayan itself. Hence Kirmānī merely copied them here.

The argument that the Bab is the Muslims' expected Imam, however, is his own. He claims that: (a) the ancient Persian prophets and philosophers had predicted the conquest of Iran by the Arabs and the Persians' loss of control over Iran for a period amounting to "1200 and a few years"; then a new kind bearing a new religion will arise from Pars, and will establish his religion and rule over the entire world from East to West; it is then that the state of ʿajam will progress; (b) the Hindus speak of the return of the Mahdīv (ancient title given to pagan gods) to the Eastern world; the Mahdi is this very Mahadīv, and his appearance was predicted to be the present time; (c) Majlisī had related that the Twelfth Hidden Imam would appear when reaching his thousandth birthday. The author further asserts that the appearance at that time has been announced in the Sunna and Traditions. He states that Ibn Khaldun himself, quoting some Traditions, had written in his book that, at the end of the time, knowledge, book, and philosophy will be transferred from Arabia to ʿAjam, and the Persians will be heir to the science of prophecy.

Kirmānī also cites many Traditions that claim that the name of the expected Mahdi would be ʿAlī Muhammad.[102]

It seems to us ironical that Kirmānī, who had throughout his adult life condemned the Shīʿī ulama for their great abuse of erroneous and fabricated Traditions, thought it convenient to adopt the same fallacious "proofs" for his theological debate. He obviously wished to meet his opponents on their own grounds and to beat their system from within that system. Secondly, it seems even more remarkable to observe his recurring nationalism. To him the Bab and Babism were symbolic of Iran's cultural and historical "renaissance" which he thought it was in dire need of ever since the Arab conquest in the seventh century.

In the remaining part of the chapter the author assumes a more violent tone as he goes on to defend the cause of the Bab and the Babis. He writes that it is incumbent upon God and nature to denounce any false pretender to prophecy. Such imposters had appeared throughout the ages, and they were all discovered as mere deceivers.

> However, if we witness in the pretender a strengthening of his will and power, and a magnetic influence upon the people's souls, even though the majority of men oppose him and attempt to accuse him of fraud, we would consider him to be victorious and righteous, assisted by God. And those who throw stones at him would themselves fall.[103]

If the root of the tree is strong, then it will blossom in profusion; if it is not strong enough, the tree will die. Thus if it were not for the martyrdom of Husayn and the hardships suffered by the Twelve Imams, the foundation of Islam would have been completely destroyed in the time of the Umayyad Caliphate. For the Umayyad had taken the power of religion to mean "apparent victory" and turned divine power into kingly power. They undertook to conquer nations in the same cruel and bloody fashion as the savage Mongol invaders. In spite of the holiness, purity, and spirituality of the Imams, Islam was prevented from growing naturally to its most perfect stage. It is for this reason that the Muslims have been deprived of "rational victory and spiritual sovereignity". Hence we notice, Kirmānī concludes, that the Caliphs' victorious conquests, instead of being a cause of strength for Islam, only served to weaken and to debase the religion. In comparison the persecution, oppression, and enslavement suffered by the Babi followers at the hands of the Persian government and ulama succeeded in strengthening the Babi religion and good spirit.[104]

The author's fiercest attack is directed towards the ulama whom he accuses of cruelty and ignorance. He states that the ulama committed such savage crimes because they were incapable of confronting the Babis with a rational polemic refuting the latters' claim.

> Why haven't all these Sunni and Shīʿī ulama, philosophers, and learned men written a single

> book noting down, in a rational and logical manner, all the necessary proofs to refute and condemn the Babi sayings? Because they were ignorant and incapable of it.... The very few books written, such as Hājjī Muhammad Kāzim Khān Qājār's, were so full of mistakes and fallacies that by replying to it one would prove and assert the legitimacy of the Bayan's religion and show instead the Hājjī's own fraud.[105]

Kirmānī agrees with the opponents of the Bab that the latter is not the Thirteenth Imam. Yet he claims that the fact that the number of Imams succeeding the Prophet Muhammad is twelve has no relevance to the question of the Qā'im and appearance of the Mahdi at the end of time. For it is not a Muslim condition that he must be a descendant of Husayn. Nor has it been recorded in the Book and in the Sunnat that the Qā'im, the Mahdi, is the same person as Muhammad b. Hasan who went into concealment and would some day reappear. For all the ahl-i sunnat claim is that the Mahdi will be born at the end of time. On this subject all various sects, Shī'īte, Zaydī, Ismā'īlī,...have different opinions. It is only a Twelver Shī'ī belief that the Twelfth Imam is hiding in some unknown island and will come back soon. It is therefore no universal proof, and above all it is an irrational belief.

> For no sound reason can believe that an individual could remain with the same one-thousand-years-old body in a city unknown to all, unseen by anyone, and in spite of everything keep his youthful appearance. We have no proof, no indication, no sign of his being anywhere in the world.[106]

Kirmānī then sets out to explain that the ulama had no valid reason to call the Babis, the ahl-i Bayan, heretics. For the latter believe in the one supreme perfect Being. They believe in all of God's prophets, in all holy books, though they consider the Koran to be the best, for it has not been surpassed. The Bayan is merely the exposé, the explanation of the Koran. The Persian Bayan reveals the same holy laws, the same truths as found in the Koran. It never claimed to be holier, nobler and therefore abolishing the Muslim book. If by chance it does negate a Koranic ordinance, it is because it was in need of renewal or change. The ahl-i Bayan also believe in the Twelve Imams and in Qiyāmat. All their beliefs are based on sound proofs and rational studies and not on mere imitation. They believe in the returning of the Mahdi, the Qā'im descendant of the house of Muhammad, as recorded in the sharī'at and as revealed by Shaykh Ahmad-i Ahsā'ī and Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī, whom they regard with veneration. They "rationally attest" that Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad Shīrāzī is the expected Mahdi, that his book is the Word of God, that he was sent to lift all dissensions and discords from among the various nations, to spread justice, to enlighten all minds, to abolish nonsense. Consequently they do not at all deny or reject any point of Islam.

> No one has therefore the right to condemn them as heretics.... Assuming that they were wrong to believe that the expected Mahdi has made his appearance, their opponents' sole action should be to point out their mistake with the help of rational

proofs. And certainly not to excommunicate and persecute them...[107]

The author proudly claims that the Bayan has converted to its true cause many of the most learned, most intelligent, most important men of the Persian society and of the ahl-i kitāb. Others did not convert because they were ignorant, or unaware of Babism, or fanatically clinging to their own religion, or fearful of persecution, or wishing to woo the authorities in order to enrich themselves, or to attain power.[108] He praises the Babis because they have become the most accomplished, most learned, most perfect people endowed with spiritual and intellectual power and noble virtues which provide them with a force "surpassing the power of 10,000 English naval cannons".[109] Because they are moved by strong, beautiful feelings such as love, self-sacrifice, honor, piousness, courage, patience, endurance, humanism, hope,... history in fact has not yet recorded a story as heroic as theirs. Some of the Babi names surpass in glory the legendary names of Farhād and Shīrīn, Vīs and Rāmīn, Majnūn and Leilā. For "the tale of Farhād and Shīrīn is but a small part of the tale of our exciting love".[110] The history of Babism is thus full of names of heroes.

Finally, Kirmānī classifies non-believers into two categories. In the first he includes Hindus and Zoroastrians and their like who "worship cows", as well as Jews, Christians and Muslims to whom

religion is reduced to a prayer on Friday, Saturday or Sunday and to a few rules and customs, the meaning and truth of which they do not know. Such ignorant people are "enemies of humanity", and prevent the world from progressing. Believers are strictly forbidden to talk to them. If one wants to reform them, one has to send them to schools to study arts and sciences until they naturally, by themselves, get rid of their own ignorance. The second category includes non-believers who are sensitive, intelligent and of good taste, who do not imitate, who reach their own conclusions after sound investigation, study and thinking. They are individuals who, after having heard the "foolish and weak proofs and arguments of above-mentioned idiots", gave up their faith in any religion, which they came to consider a silly game left over from time past. The believer is allowed to talk to these "materialist, naturalist" people. For they believe in their own reason. One has to convince them, of course, of their mistake by explaining to them that since their own reason is created and acquired, they have to believe in "One Reason, Creator of all acquired reasons!"[111]

The Bab made no such distinction. It is rather characteristic of Kirmānī to show more respect to atheists who believed in reason than to believers whose faith was based on tradition and/or submission to the authorities.

On the History of the Bayan

In this last chapter Mīrzā Āqā Khān relates the history of Babism. It includes a long list of disciples, followers and sympathizers of the new religion with Sayyid Javād Shīrāzī known as Karbalā'ī heading the list.

The most important section of this chapter deals with the dispute of Subh-i Azal with his older brother Bahā'ullah. Kirmānī supports the former as the rightful successor and accuses the latter of intrigue and murder. His attack on Bahā'īsm is vicious, petty, and above all, unscholarly. He had earlier condemned the ulama for their unfair and irrational judgement of Babism, yet he committed the same unforgivable mistake by allowing his personal emotions to overcome and silence his voice of reason.

Conclusion

The original Persian Bayan was essentially preoccupied with the concept and attributes of God. Its laws and ordinances aim at directing man to the stright path and at preparing him for the Day of Judgement. Its precepts are therefore future oriented. This future is neither worldly nor man-centered, for the ultimate goal is to please the Supreme Being by fulfilling his wishes and commands. The Bayan also aims at proving to the Muslims especially, and less so to the

Jews and Christians, that the Bab is the rightful messenger of God, that his word is God's last word. Hence its main purpose is to counterattack the Shī'ī ulama's refutation.

Hasht Bihisht's interpretation of the Bayan is drastically different. It reveals a deep humanist concern with man and man's life on this earth. It aims at instituting necessary reforms in order to establish a worldly "celestial kingdom". The future it envisions is thus man-centered. Whereas Babism sees man's redemption only possible in an after-death life, this "interpretation" seeks to redeem man "here and now", that is, in this life.

Though founded on Babism, Kirmānī's madīna-yi fāzila (ideal city) is structured according to the secular models of Western political thought. It curiously combines a Platonic type of philosopher-king leadership and Greek city's sharp class distinction with Rousseau's concept of social contract, with the early socialists' utopian dream of communal life, with Persian religious and philosophical ideals. It features a strange mélange of aristocratic, democratic, socialistic as well as mystical elements.

The author's "brave new world", though conceived in humanistic terms for the benefit of mankind in general, for the realization of one

homogeneous, cross-cultural, universal nation in fact projects to the forefront Kirmānī's nationalist, ethnocentric thought. He assails with scorn the Arabs. He hails the Bab as the redeemer who would liberate Iran from Islam, the Arabs' religion. He sees in Babism a hopeful means to help bring about a Persian cultural renaissance. By promoting the adoption of Persian as a universal language, of norūz as the first day of an international calendar, of Shiraz as the new Mecca, he expresses his wish to see Iran reassume its past world supremacy.

Stated in the broadest possible terms, what the authors of Hasht Bihisht, and especially Kirmānī, had done was to displace in radical fashion the central emphasis in the Babi legacy. They had shifted it from religion to the moral and political aspects of life in society. In so doing, they had focused on what in the Bab's teaching could be presumed to have some general validity beyond the spiritual values of the religious movement. Thus Babism could be absorbed into the mainstream of Persian political revolutionary thought. Its doctrine inspired Kirmānī directly and provided him with an awe of religious legitimacy. For the writer found in Babism the religious rationale for a humanitarian and intellectual revulsion from the autocratic fanaticism of the Qajars and the Shīʿī ulama. The Bab's influence upon him was also as an ethical leader who reminded him of the

great European secular reformers of the Age of Enlightenment.

Hence we can understand why Hasht Bihisht was given such a frankly non-religious interpretation which, when compared with the original Bayan, might appear on the edge of heresy, but which proved supremely attractive to the writers' revolutionary mind. We can also practically understand why Kirmānī, in his non-Babi works where he openly attacks all religions and all prophets, had no hesitation in condemning the Bab as well and to attribute to Babism the same defects he found objectionable in Islam and religion in general.

We might ask ourselves why Mīrzā Āqā Khān chose to follow Subh-i Azal rather than Baha' ullah. We know that the Bahā'īs by far outnumbered the Azalis. E. G. Browne, during his stay in Iran 1887-88, noticed that the Bahā'īs "constituted a great potential political force" in the country.[112] Lord Curzon estimated their number at one million,[113] whereas the Azalis constituted only a very small minority. Obviously then Kirmānī was not interested in championing the most popular sect. We also know that the Bahā'ī never made use of this "potential force", for they adopted a pacifist attitude instead.

> Bahā'Ullah wisely avoided any political entanglements, and indeed sought rather to conciliate the Shah and the Persian government, and to represent such persectuions of his followers as took place in Persia as the work of fanatical theologians whom the government was unable to restrain..... In the national movement officially

> Abbas Efendi Abdu l Baha commanded his followers to abstain entirely from politics, while in private he compared the demand of the Persians for parliamentary government to that of unweaned babes for strong meat.[114]

Such pacificism, such political conservatism could not have appealed to Mīrzā Āqā Khān's revolutionary spirit.

The Azali Babis, on the other hand, preferred to continue the struggle, and "preserved the old Babi tradition of unconquerable hostility to the Persian throne and government."[115] As we have mentioned already before, they took a very prominent part in the national movement even before the 1905 revolution. For, to quote Browne again:

> Indeed...the idea of a democratic Persia developing on purely national lines seems to have inspired in the minds of no few Azalis the same fierce enthusiasm as did the idea of a reign of the Saints on earth in the case of the early Babis."[116]

Without necessarily completely disagreeing with Browne, we would rather reverse this statement in the case of Kirmānī. It is because of his ideal of a revolutionary Persia "developing on purely national lines" that he championed the Azali cause. It is his innate quest for heroic action that, to a large extent, drew him to Babism in the first place, and later to the more active succeeding sect. Such thirst for heroism led him to write with great pride that the Babis' noble feelings constituted a force "surpassing the power of 10,000 English

naval cannons", and that "the tales of Farhād and Shīrīn are but a small part of the tale of our exciting love".

We shall see in a subsequent chapter that, of all the Persian poets, it is Firdausi who attracted him most. For the Shāhnāma celebrates the glorious deeds of ancient Persian heroes and relates the heroic legends of a past, mighty Iran.

Hence, ideologically and by natural inclination, Kirmānī's sectarian choice was almost unavoidable.

Footnotes

1. Béyan Persan, Paris, 1911, translated A. Nicolas, Part I, p. 49.

2. Photocopied letter in Hasht Bihisht, p. 2. From here on initials H.B. will be used to refer to this work.

3. H.B., p. 18.

4. Adamiyat, Andīshihā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, p. 51, footnote no. 2.

5. H.B., p. 24.

6. H.B., p. 26.

7. H.B., p. 27.

8. H.B., p. 2.

9. H.B., p. 3.

10. H.B., p. 6.

11. H.B., p. 7.

12. H.B., p. 8.

13. H.B., p. 9.

14. H.B., p. 10.

15, H.B., p. 11.

16. H.B., p. 12.

17. H.B., pp. 13-14.

18. H.B., p. 15.

19. H.B., p. 16.

20. H.B., p. 17.

21. H.B., p. 18.

22. H.B., p. 20.

23. H.B., p. 21.

24. H.B., p. 22.

25. Le Béyan Persan, Part I, p. XI.

26. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

27. Ibid., Part III, p. 140.

28. Ibid., Part IV, pp. 164-166.

29. H.B., pp. 33-34.

30. H.B., p. 38.

31. H.B.

32. H.B., p. 55.

33. H.B., p. 56.

34. H.B., p. 63.

35. H.B., p. 64.

36. H.B., p. 65.

37. H.B.

38. H.B., p. 66.

39. H.B., p. 67.

40. H.B., p. 69.

41. H.B., pp. 70-76.

42. H.B., p. 83.

43. H.B., p. 82.

44. H.B., p. 83.

45. H.B., p. 85.

46. H.B., p. 94.

47. H.B., p. 96.

48. H.B., p. 99.

49. H.B., p. 101.

50. H.B., p. 104.

51. H.B., p. 98.

52. H.B., pp. 107-111.

53. H.B., p. 113.

54. H.B., p. 122.

55. Le Béyan Persan, Part IV, p. 99.

56. Ibid., Part II, p. 166.

57. H.B., p. 128.

58. H.B., pp. 129-132.

59. H.B., pp. 138-139.

60. H.B., p. 141.

61. H.B., p. 144.

62. Le Béyan Persan, Part IV, p. 117.

63. H.B., p. 145.

64. H.B., pp. 145-146.

65. H.B., p. 149.

66. H.B., p. 151.

67. H.B., p. 150.

68. H.B.

69. H.B., pp. 155-156.

70. H.B., p. 169.

71. H.B., pp. 162-166.

72. H.B., p. 167.

73. H.B., p. 168.

74. Le Béyan Persan, Part IV, p. 13.

75. H.B., p. 169.

76. H.B., p. 172.

77. H.B., p. 173.

78. Le Béyan Persan, Part III, pp. 74-79.

79. H.B., p. 175.

80. H.B., p. 176.

81. Le Béyan Persan, Part IV, pp. 48-50, 51.

82. H.B., p. 178.

83. H.B., p. 195.

84. H.B., p. 196.

85. H.B., p. 197.

86. H.B., p. 198.

87. H.B., p. 199.

88. H.B., pp. 202-204.

89. H.B., p. 205.

90. H.B., p. 224.

91. H.B., p. 225.

92. H.B., p. 226.

93. H.B., p. 227.

94. H.B., p. 231.

95. H.B., p. 232.

96. H.B., p. 228.

97. H.B., p. 230.

98. H.B., pp. 229, 234.

99. H.B., pp. 235-240.

100. H.B., p. 245.

101. H.B., pp. 246-247.

102. H.B., pp. 248, 255.

103. H.B., p. 256.

104. H.B., p. 257.

105. H.B.

106. H.B., p. 263.

107. H.B., p. 266.

108. H.B., p. 267.

109. H.B., p. 268.

110. H.B., p. 269.

111. H.B., pp. 272-273.

112. E. G. Browne, Materials for the Study of Babi Religion, Cambridge, 1918, p. XVI.

113. Lord Curzon, Persia, London, 1892, Vol. I, p. 499.

114. Browne, Ibid., p. XVIII.

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid., p. XIX.

6

NATIONALISM AND REVOLUTION

Frantz Fanon, in his Peau Noire, Masques Blancs, had written "la conscience a besoin de se perdre dans la nuit de l'absolu, seule condition par parvenir a la conscience de soi".[1] In the life and thought of Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, the nineteenth century Persian revolutionary, we detect a similar, though subconscious, desire to plunge into the darkness of the Absolute in order to emerge with a new, clear-cut image of Iran, the culture and the nation. The resulting self-view bears all the marks of an extremism, generally so characteristic of modern nationalism, which in its best aspects generates a dynamic self-awareness that helps bring about the change necessary to shake off the yoke of the existing socio-political stagnation, and in its worst aspects creates a new breed of fanaticism that is as intransigent, as oppressive and destructive as the one it tries to eliminate.

In this chapter we shall discuss:

1. Kirmānī's sharp criticism of his society.
2. His attempt to put the blame for national decay on:
   a. The Arabs. He displays a violent hatred for them, a hatred that leads him to adopt some of the contemporary European

anti-semitic, racist theories.

b. Islam, which he rejects as being a religion alien to the Persians' nature and culture.

c. The Shī'ī ulama.

d. The Qajar ruler and his corrupt court.

3. His fierce nationalism, which makes him seek Iran's true identity in its pre-Islamic past.

4. The revolutionary solution he offers to cure the social ills.

Before beginning, we should first like to introduce briefly some of Kirmānī's historical and socio-anthropological assumptions that, presumably, provided him with a basic framework for his national study.

He surmises that nature has endowed men and animals with the appropriate means to survive in their respective environment: a thick fur to beasts living in cold climates, sharp claws for hunting animals,...

> Thus everywhere, whatever was necessary for the existence and preservation of the species, and for the protection of the body, was created.[2]

From there he derives the theory that a nation's character is a consequence of its vital needs. For instance, the Afghan who lives in mountains and jungles inhabited by dangerous animals such as lions,

leopards, tigers, possesses a great moral courage and physical endurance, qualities not needed by an English lady or a Parisian prince who live a sophisticated urban life. Consequently, people all over the world differ one from the other in terms of personality, customs, beliefs and mores. And "the best race is that race that produces all its natural needs" and is therefore self-sufficient. The true purpose of a "national civilization" should be to produce all its natural, vital necessities for its independent existence.[3]

Kirmānī also states that the political structure of a society usually corresponds to its religious beliefs. To illustrate his point he takes ancient Greece as an example. He claims that Greek polytheism was the origin of democracy and representative government.

> The belief in many gods impelled them to have many deputies and directors in charge of the various state departments, and never to allow any single individual to take the reins of government in his own hands, as it was the custom with the monotheists.... This was the origin of the government that promoted: a republic, a constitution, an assembly of representatives, socialism, democracy, aristocracy...and the like.[4]

The Greek gods, asserts the author, were not extraordinary idols. They were believed to be like ordinary men, even sharing human defects. The difference lay in the gods' immortality. No individual was therefore conceived as the "Son of Heaven". The world's fortune or misfortune was never made solely dependent upon one man.

> This made each subject of the nation consider himself as equal to the king and the governors in his human rights and national privileges.[5]

In sharp contrast to this situation, Kirmānī observes, Persians never enjoyed freedom and equality, for they deified their monarchs, and interpreted their social misery as being God's will. They therefore saw themselves as helpless and powerless creatures, deprived of any rights. Hence, "Iran's progress or decay, weakness or power depended upon the individual Padishah".[6] Iran has always been ruled despotically and has never experienced a republican, constitutional, legitimate government.

Finally, Kirmānī states emphatically that since religion and government are both man-made institutions, born out of the human needs, they must fit those needs.

Kirmānī was also greatly interested in historiography and was quite well read in history. He claimed that the history of a nation should not be reduced to the history of its kings and wars, but should also include a study of its people, its religion, its customs and mores, laws and institutions, and economy as well as analysis of its rise and decline throughout its various ages.[7] Historians should use all available sources in the form of archeological excavations, coins, living and languages, folklore and mythology.[8] Truth and objectivity

should be their sole purpose. In Sad Khitāba he writes that a nation's "ruin and destruction...is not a state of natural order" and therefore one should detect the causes of ruin and study them in order to prevent their future recurrence.[9] Yet, in Ā'īn-i Skandarī he promotes the nineteenth century materialistic, determinist concept of history. He asserts that a nation's progress and decline are but various cycles determined by the exigencies of time and the march of events, and as unavoidable as the change of seasons. No nation can escape such permutation.[10]

In the course of our study of Kirmānī's nationalist and revolutionary thoughts, we shall see that he would often fall from his own rational, scientifically objective ideal, and that he would contradict his previous statements again and again.

Social Criticism

Throughout his formative years in Iran, Mīrzā Āqā Khān had suffered from the inadequacy and irrelevance of the traditional education he was given. In all his works he expresses his utter disillusionment with the "daily meal" which left him famished and frustrated.

> Any wretched fellow who had drunk this soup remained hungry, poor and distressed.[11]

He assails with scorn the subjects taught in the local schools, claiming that the study of Arabic grammar and vocabulary corrupts

the Persian language; the study of fiqh and hadith reinforces the prevailing spiritual stagnation; the study of hikmat and the interpretation of the Koran raise fruitless questions concerning trivial matters.

> What do I gain, I an Iranian, from knowing all about Khālid b. Walīd or Yazīd b. Muʿawiya? What do I gain by reading all about ʿAlī and his sons or the love and hate of ʿAbbās?[12]

Such learning, he states, makes no solid contribution to the glory of the nation, to the power of the government, to the enrichment of the population. He holds the religious philosophers, such as Mullah Sadrā, as well as the ulama of all sects--Shīʿī, Shaykhi, Bābi--responsible for the nation's intellectual and scientific backwardness. They all have wasted their time dealing with futile "spiritual matters", and hence remained ignorant of important matters concerning the world, or even their own country.

> An Armenian school child would surpass the Muslim ʿālim in his knowledge of science and foreign languages.[13]

The Persian classical poets are not spared either. He vehemently attacks them for having had a disastrous moral effect on the people.

> The result of their metaphysics and mysticism has been nothing but a crop of brutish idleness and sloth, and the production of religious mendicants and beggars; the result of their odes to roses and nightingales has been nothing but corruption of our young men's morals and the impelling of them toward smooth cheeks and red wine.[14]

For he believed that poetry should primarily have a social and patriotic purpose.

> The proper effect of poetry is the stirring of men's hearts, the moving of their compassion and the quickening of their understanding and thoughts; it must impel the virtues, piety and moderation.

Kirmānī's ideal poets are the Europeans who

> ...have brought poetry and the poetic art under so sound a scheme of arrangement, and have made their verses so conformable to the laws of logic that they have no other effect than to illuminate men's ideas... educate them...inspire them with zeal, patriotism and devotion to their people.[15]

He praises only Firdausi who wrote epics about pre-Islamic Persian legendary heroes.

Thus the author impatiently rejects the Persian cultural heritage as too trivial and useless. Poetry, philosophy, theology, all fields in which the Persians traditionally excelled and which brought world fame to their nation are harshly condemned. It is the "new sciences" that are important. Hence he complains bitterly that no Persian ever thought of writing a book on physics, chemistry, economy, agriculture, law,...or any subject that promotes "the progress of humanity". Consequently:

> while science has enlightened the whole world, Iran still remains in darkness.[16]

Kirmānī suggests that the wrong and outmoded Persian system of moral values and beliefs is a direct consequence of a deficient education. He points out the religious fanaticism prevailing among his countrymen. This abject result of ignorance is best illustrated by

the Babi episode. Although he defines the Babis as a group of people who rightfully started their movement by "attempting to shake off the burden of the Arab sharī'at and the Shī'ī sect" but ended by "stupidly submitting themselves to the grotesque sayings of the Bab", he nevertheless justifies their faith. He addresses the Muslim audience thus:

> O people! What is their fault?....What is their crime?....You believed in Muhammad the Arab, they in Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad the Shīrāzī. Whatever the former said, the latter also said. One brought the Koran, the other the Bayan. If the one's verse was miraculously revealed in Arabic, the other's was miraculously revealed in Arabic and Persian. What the Jews, Christians, and Muslims say, they also say. Either all religions are right and correct, then their's is also right and correct; or all religions are wrong and lies, then their's is also wrong and a lie.[17]

And he strongly condemns the bloody massacre of the Babis by the ulama and the street mob. He describes in detail the horrors that publicly took place in Tehran during the reign of terror, following the first attempt on Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah's life: the fierce-looking ulama supervising the scene, the terrifying official executioners, the Darvishes who seemed to take such a cruel and unnatural delight in torturing the "heretics", the great crowd assembled in the Maydan to watch, encourage and even participate in the carnage, the shrieks of the women whose passion was unleashed, the whole air of festivity hanging around.

> All this to bring to light the blood-thirsty, merciless, cruel, and savage nature of present day Iranians.[18]

Ignorance also breeds superstition, claims Mīrzā Āqā Khān, who had personally observed its evil results, for his own native city with its numerous saintly shrines and religious sites attracted thousands and thousands of worshippers from all over the country.

> If one wishes to witness a sample of the Persians' misery, one should accompany them to Kerbala or Najaf...the state of their misery is beyond the power of description.[19]

He criticizes the veneration accorded to the tombs of the Imams and Imamzadas and reveals with great accuracy the abuses of the ulama in charge and the naivete of the believers who expect and even crave for miracles. The pilgrims spend whatever fortune they possess in this world, endure bad weather and unhealthy surroundings, fall prey to rapacious Ottoman officials and local attendants just to worship a "few rotten bones in dusty graves".[20] The author challenges the necessity of pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the pillars of Islam. He asserts that European statistics (in transliterated French) have shown that the performance of this holy ordinance costs the Muslims one hundred million tumans a year.

> And what for?....to go several times around a black stone like crazy people, in the heat of the sun, to kill a thousand poor beasts, and to come back to their country, having lost all their possessions, hungry and barefoot, having gained the title of hājjī.... I swear by the God of Mecca that, apart from a house, a mosque, a black stone, a burning soil, bitter water, and a handful of lizard-eaters, merciless and rude Arabs, they have seen and understood nothing.[21]

The fortune spent for the upkeep of thousand-year-old tombs all over the nation could be used instead for the building of hospitals, libraries and homes for the aged.

The Persians, laments Kirmānī, have lost their power to reason. They believe anything that is said to them without understanding, without thinking, and behave like "asses and cows".[22] Another instance of their irrationalism is found in the Shī'ī annual custom of mourning the death of the Imams Hasan and Husayn (ʿazādārī). Mīrzā Āqā Khān deplores the fact that the believers' energy is misplaced and misused, their complaints misdirected, their attention distracted from the cruel reality of the world. For,

> if those thousands of screams and moans they utter for the Imams are uttered instead for their own miserable conditions, all the injustice and backwardness of their country would have been removed.[23]

Hence the writer here rightfully states that the people's grievances, which constitute a fertile ground for a potential force for rebellion, need to be guided to the right direction.

Kirmānī also sees in polygamy and the seclusion of women the root of moral corruption and social problems. Such traditional practices have kept women who, because of their role as first educators of children, hold a vital place in the family and society at large, in a state of ignorance and backwardness. The embittered wives have

created at home a tense atmosphere of hostility, rivalry, and cunning. Consequently their influence upon the children has been detrimental, for the latter learn from their earliest years to lie, to cheat and to mistrust one another.[24] Furthermore, the lack of normal relationships between young men and women encouraged homosexuality.[25] The extreme puritanism and the strict adherence to trivial conventions, such as keeping away from places where there is dancing and music, social etiquette and hypocritical formulas of politeness, traditional costumes, have prevented the Persian society from growing normally and efficiently.[26]

And yet, the author argues, the Persians display such pride and conceit which are without any valid foundation.

> Those proud people have no reason to be so, since they are corrupt, cheaters, liars, cruel to the poor and needy, greedy and selfish.... Pride must be earned through service to the country and its people, through good and honest conduct.[27]

In fact, Iran has become a laughing stock in the eyes of the Americans, Europeans and Japanese nations.

> Whereas the English colonel would never betray his fatherland, not even for a hundred pounds bribery, an Iranian sartip would sell his for fifty pounds. Only fear of punishment would prevent him from committing such crimes.[28]

Such a general state of moral corruption, selfishness and lack of patriotism brought about Iran's economic decay. Although the

country possesses all the natural resources necessary to develop a prosperous self-sufficient national economy: mountains, forests, rivers, fertile lands, mild climate, and mines of precious metals and stones, it lies barren and wasted. There are no explorers, no efficient experts, no learned scientists to exploit the wealth. There exists no adequate means of communication to facilitate travelling from one part of the country to the other. Hence the Persian merchants import all basic needs for livelihood from abroad. Here the author expresses his fear that "ignorance has spread so far that even water would soon be bought from Europe".[29]

Finally, Kirmānī angrily denounces the social system which does not promote equality and just laws, and condones unfair distribution of wealth. The Shah and his aristocratic entourage are the obvious target of his criticism.

> Why should one say: I am the Shah, therefore I should possess a vast fortune, many clothes, palaces and gardens, plenty of food...while a barefoot beggar dressed in rags must starve and sleep on stones? ...which holy book allows a person to accumulate wealth through illegal and injust means, such as trade, while a poor worker who sweats all day long, has no food, no shelter in compensation for his hard labour.[30]

Those Responsible for National Decay

Mīrzā Āqā Khān's most fierce and eloquent accusation is directed toward the Arabs whom he holds essentially responsible for Iran's

national decay which started thirteen centuries ago. Although in some of his most lucid, most "objective" moments, he frankly admits that it was the Sasanid dynastic corruption and bureaucratic chaos as well as the social and economic injustice prevailing at that time that brought military defeat at the hands of the Muslims,[31] he prefers to see in the Arab conquest the root of Iran's problems.

He depicts the Arabs as a handful of ignorant, savage lizard-eaters, blood-thirsty, barefoot, camel riders, desert-dwelling nomads, who, prior to the Prophet's advent, lived from theft, raid and plunder.[32] Muhammad brought the Koran in order to enlighten their minds, refine their mores and customs, organize their political community, and provide them with a sound code of law; in short, to civilize them. Instead, they misunderstood Islam, ignored the Koran's precepts, and, taking up religion as an excuse, set up to satisfy their natural greed and warrior temper by conquering the neighboring nations.[33] Thus Islam succeeded in unifying them only in times of raiding, killing and stealing, for when it came to sharing the booth, they were at each other's throats. Instead of establishing unity and accord amongst the Muslims, they brought animosity and discord. They shed Muslim blood in fruitless struggles within their own community.

> ʿAlī and Muʿawiya's war, Talha's and Zubayr's rivalry, ʿAyīsha's thirst for blood, Fātima's curses,

> Husayn's exile to Kufah are petty political and personal disputes that had no connection with the holy religion of Islam.[34]

The author then denounces the Arabs' extreme cruelty to the Persians, the slaughtering of those who refused to convert, the destruction of their beautiful monuments, the burning of their books. He blames the Arabs for corruption and degeneration of the once refined, noble and moral nature of the Persian nation as a whole.

> Even though we are no longer ruled by the Arabs, we have still kept their worst characteristic features and have lost our own civilized old habits and customs.[35]

Among these features he mentions false pride, strong animosity and petty feuds among the people, as reflected in the rise of various Persian sects such as the Shaykhi, Usuli, Akhbari, Babi, Bahai, Azali,... the habit of killing, the seclusion of women.... The worst consequence of the Arab conquest was, however, the Islamization of Iran. Kirmānī states that the Koranic laws, because they were written down by an Arab primarily for Arabs, do not fit the Persians who already had a highly sophisticated civilization of their own and an elaborate political organization. Those rules befit only a "barbarian nation".[36] They were designed to raise the Arabs' standard of living, their morals and their beliefs. There was and there will be nothing better for them than the Muhammadan shari at.[37] The natures of the Arabs and the Persians are as opposite as fire and water, cold and heat; the gap existing between the

two is as high as the distance between the earth and the sky.[38]

The evil consequences of Islam brought to Iran at the point of the sword are numerous. One result of such an attestation (tasdīq) which was made without previous rational judgement, out of sheer fear, is scepticism. For to believe without understanding leads to an exaggerated sense of criticism, doubt, and objection. A second result is imitation. Because the Persians did not understand what they swore to believe in, in a language they could not understand, they did what the others were doing. They lost the habit of thinking for themselves. A third result is the dissimulation (taqīya or kitmān). In order to survive the people had to hide their real thoughts. This habit led to the habit of lying, so much so that the truth is never heard in Iran.[39]

Lastly, Mīrzā Āqā Khān condemns the Arabs for the heavy Arabization of the Persian language, as well as the adoption of their script which rendered reading and writing difficult.

> The Arabs have not only invaded our religion and government but also our sweet language.... Their destruction of our ancestors' language is worse than our country's ruin, for nothing is remaining from our once glorious nation, since nothing has remained from our beloved language.[40]

Not only did the Persians suffer from the Arab military invasion, not only were they forced to adopt the "creed of Arabism" (āʾīn-iʿarabīyat),

not only did they witness the burning of their ancient books and were compelled to study, in an alien language, "a mixed up Koran that has no beginning and no end", but also they remained culturally backward, for all Persian studies were entirely neglected ever since.[41]

Thus we see that Kirmānī used the Arabs and Islam as a convenient scapegoat for nineteenth century Iran's social, economic, and cultural stagnation, as well as moral degeneration. Such an unjust, grotesque, false, and unbelievable accusation brings to the fore the author's extreme chauvinism that blinds him to such a degree that he scornfully dismisses Muslim Iran's thirteen centuries worth of cultural contribution as non-Persian and therefore valueless.

This anti-Arab feeling led him to gulp readily and accept as "scientific facts" some contemporary European racist theories. Thus he explains that "some learned people" claim that the prolonged customs and mores of a nation can bring about a total transformation to the physical constitution of its people. One could therefore detect from among a crowd of Persians, Greeks, English, Ethiopians, Sudanese and Arabs who is civilized and who is primitive by their physical features such as: the shape of the nose, the color of the skin, the blood,... Here Kirmānī implies that the first three nationalities are civilized whereas the last three are not.[42] And he

further pursues his racial prejudice, saying,

> Any man can recognize a Jew from the latter's facial form, color, shape and personal conduct. Any educated person could read in a Jew's physiognomy the 3,000-year-old contempt, abjectness and ugliness. Any scientist with some knowledge in the study of personality would know all about...that nation's stubbornness... cheating, deceitfulness, and hypocrisy.[43]

He attempts to substantiate his argument with "a scientific proof" by stating that the Jews were made so "stubborn, hypocritical, revengeful, and envious" because nature has created each living being with a means of defense and protection for self-preservation, just like the dog has a heightened sense of smell, the Siberian bear a thick fur, ...[44] The author goes on attacking the Jews for their arrogance, conceit, and sense of superiority.

> In spite of the fact that they have been humiliated, and still are, in most nations of the world, they still consider themselves as the noblest and elite of the human race.[45]

Finally he denounces Moses as the man responsible for their defects by "claiming he was a prophet, with the right to govern and to whom all must pay obedience.... Hence the Jewish religion has changed the nation's original nature and given birth to ugly disposition and base character".[46]

Similarly, Kirmānī argues, the Persians since the Arab conquest have lost their good looks, their proud and happy faces, their elegant and well shaped figures because of the acquired low standard of

morality, the bad habits, and the feeling of total discouragement.[47]

Along with the Arabs and Islam, Mīrzā Āqā Khān blames the ulama for their destructive role in the history of the Persian nation and culture.

> This faith, which the Persians were forced to accept at the point of the Arab sword, today is still apparently accepted out of the fear of the ulama's weapon of curse and excommunication. That day fearing the sword, today fearing the pen.[48]

He states that the ulama have created this practice of excommunication, takfīr, as an instrument for achieving power. The Prophet did not institute such a practice, for Islam was made a simple and easy religion. It was enough to say "there is no God but God" to be considered a Muslim. Hence the religious leaders have disregarded God's command to judge with justice, equity, and right.[49] Similarly they are guilty of disobeying the Prophet's wishes by declaring the Jews and the Christians, whom the Koran considers as "people of the book", to be "unclean", najis. This foul belief has caused Iran's complete isolation from the non-Muslim world. Such a lack of contact with the outer world and its progress was detrimental to the Muslims.[50] Furthermore, the ignorant mullahs who, in order to consolidate the power of the Safavid dynasty, established Shi'ism in Iran, are responsible for the harmful animosity that was subsequently aroused between the Sunnis and the Shī'is, an animosity that is going

to last forever.[51] Kirmānī strongly opposes some of the extremist Shīʿī practices:

> It is not our duty to deify ʿAlī or to curse the others. We must not see any difference between ʿAlī and Umar, Abu Bakr and Uthmān. For there is none, and we cannot elevate ʿAlī to the rank of a prophet.[52]

It is the ulama's ignorance that helped the spread of superstition and faith in erroneous beliefs. For they have corrupted, misinterpreted, and misunderstood the religious precepts.

> While European learned men are busy studying mathematics, sciences, politics, and economics, the rights of man, in an age of socialism and fight for the improvement of the poor's conditions, the Persian ulama are discussing problems of cleanliness and the ascension of the Prophet to Heaven.[53]

Their whole concern is self-enrichment and self-interest. Even their attitude toward God is blasphemous. For they take the Supreme Being as being a Padishah in need of flatteries who would be gratified if they utter such meaningless addresses as "we are all under the shadow of your favor". Kirmānī angrily comments that they do not know that God is rich and not in need of his slaves' flattery.[54] And he adds,

> What is left of Islam is only a name empty and dried up. With utter sorrow I warn the ulama that in a few years even the name of Muslims will be taken away from us, and we would then perish as a community.[55]

We observe here, as elsewhere, that the author finds it convenient to identify himself as a Muslim, regardless of his previous un-Islamic statements.

Finally Kirmānī charges the secular government with tyranny and cruelty. He claims that ever since the Arab conquest, Iran has been ruled ruthlessly by despots who usurped power in the name of religion and divine right, erroneously pretending to be the descendants and heirs of the Prophet through ʿAlī.[56] The Shahs allowed themselves all rights to dispose of the nation's wealth and of the people's life and property as they pleased. The present king is busy selling his country to the foreigners. He will not be satisfied until

> he has brought affliction to the last Persian left,
> has handed over all the women to the Russian soldiers,
> ...and turned the people's ruined houses into stables
> to be used by the Afghans and the Ottomans.[57]

The attack is also directed against the court officials who share with their sovereign in the responsibility for the nation's ruin.

Nationalism

We now come to discuss the author's subject of despair and love, his greatest obsession, his muse that inspired both a poetic fire and a prophetic fanaticism in him, that unleashed all the passion, hatred and resentment accumulated through the years, namely, Iran. That is to say, his own image of Iran. For to him, Iran's authentic identity can be sought only in her Zoroastrian past when she was at the zenith of her glory and power, when the neighboring kings bowed to her mighty emperors, and her soldiers planted her banner in conquered lands. In his search for a worthier identity, Kirmānī ends

by creating a myth out of the pre-Islamic Iran.

He mentions his country as the "noble Aryan nation",[58] which belongs to the "good Aryan people of good extraction".[59] Zoroastrianism was the religion that best fitted the nature of its inhabitants. Its prophet established a qānūn that brought about the order and justice necessary for progress and prosperity, because it carefully distributed power among the king, the religious heads, the military forces, and the "nature of the nation". It was a law based on four essential pillars: (1) the Shah's rights and the subjects' duty to obey and respect him; (2) the subjects' rights and the Shah's duty to provide them with security and well being; (3) the people's rights and duties towards one another; (4) the religious head's duty to propagate the true religion and guide the faithful to the right path, and prevent idolatry.[60]

Hence Kirmānī's claim that ancient Persians led a happy life under the reign of law and justice. Being ruled by the right government and the right religion, they felt secure and not at the mercy of their superiors. The good was rewarded and the bad punished, all according to their deeds. Those who accomplished special services to the society were paid due honor and privileges. Women enjoyed full equality to men. Similarly the people of conquered nations were

well treated and the prisoners of war given merciful sentences.[61]

He goes on, stating that the government provided hospitals and orphanages to each town. Good roads and canals were constructed, which expanded trade and agriculture. The Persians then excelled in the arts, engineering and architecture, Persepolis being a good reminder of this past achievement. The rich language which had become universal is another sign of the superiority of Iran's ancient people and civilization over the rest of the world.[62] To further illustrate the greatness and importance of Iran's culture, he attributes Persian roots to many European and Asian terms. For instance, the old Persian word for god, dīv, is root of the French word dieu; the Egyptian royal title Khedīv is derived from the Persian Mahadīv, king of gods. Similarly the Persian word for sun, ju or ja, is the root of the French words jour and juin, and of the name Japan, the country where the sun rises.[63]

He sees in Mazdak, whom he highly praises as Mazdak the pure, ...the learned,...Mazdak the powerful philosopher, the founder of "just law and righteous creed, who 2,000 years ago lay the foundations of republicanism and egalite (in French transliteration). The anarchists in France, nihilists in Russia, socialists in England, after 700 years of culture, have barely reached Mazdak's level.[64]

Obviously the author was anxious to paint a glorious picture of ancient Iran. In so doing, he neglected to abide by the "scientific objectivity" he claimed a historian should follow. He also failed to judge rationally the situation in the past and to come with a conclusion similar to the one he reached in a later work, namely that Iran has always been ruled by despots and its people never enjoyed freedom and equality, for they deified their monarchs.

Furthermore, in his idealization attempt Mīrzā Āqā Khān described the old Persian empire as a national entity which, in fact, historically it never was.

Kirmānī's grandiose vision of his past renders the present even more bitter. For the past compared to the present is what light is to darkness.

> The name of Iran and Persians in Europe is now in ill repute. They take us for savages and wild beasts. Nobody has any respect for us.[65]

His tone turns lyrically tender, yet full of anguish and resentment as he addresses himself to Iran, which he personifies as a beautiful woman that the ancient Persians honored, glorified, and adorned, and who was raped by the Arabs.

> O, Iran! Where have all those kings, who adorned you with justice, equity, and munificence, who decorated you with pomp and splendor, gone? From that date when the barbarian, savage, coarse Bedouin

> Arabs sold your king's daughter in the street and cattle market, you have not seen a bright day, and have lain hid in darkness....
>
> Alas! What pity! O, Iran! Where has this great state gone? Where has this opulent glory gone? What happened to this famous power? Where has the divine sovereignty gone? A handful of naked, barefoot, hungry, savage Arabs have come and, for 1285 years, have plunged you into such misery and darkness. Your heavenly soil ruined; your developed cities destroyed; your people ignorant and deprived of all progress of the world, of the blessings of culture and civilization, kept away from the human rights.... Your king is a wild, blood-thirsty despot.[66]

He dreams of the future when his beloved would be rescued and restored to her greatness. And yet, in spite of it all, there is a touch of despair and pessimism as he realizes that this future is so distant.

> Ah!.... It needs such a long life!.... O, Iran! Your happiness is so far away![67]

This despair adds fuel to his passionate hatred for the Arabs. His language becomes more violent as it displays a strong feeling of frustration and humiliation.

> I spit on the Arabs! Shame on those cowards who have attacked such a great state, such a happiness, Iran, which was the signpost of the world, the object of envy for all nations.[68]

How does he think a national restoration could be achieved?

The Revolutionary Solution

To Kirmānī only a revolution could bring about the change necessary in such a decadent society. He does not, however, offer any

systematic program. Nor does he propose a sound, consistent ideology. It is therefore very difficult for us to explain, in a clear and concrete fashion, his revolutionary thought. We have merely managed to gather, from among his various works, the political views that suggest a guideline to what he had in mind. Here, once again, we should like to point to already mentioned characteristics of Kirmānī's thought: namely, the inconsistency and confusion found in his ideas.

We have stated above that Mīrzā Āqā Khān highly praised Mazdak,* the populist revolutionary who had challenged and threatened the Sasanid authority, as a man who wanted to establish in pre-Islamic

* Mazdak was the founder of a religious sect in Iran which had great political influence during the years 488-531 A.D. The best known feature of his teaching was the endeavor to remove every cause of covetousness and discord among men, and thus to purify religion, by making women and possessions common property. The reigning Persian monarch of the time had adopted the sect and even had made arrangements for putting its teaching into practice. There were also numerous conversions among the upper classes and among the common people. The movement thus became a remarkable force and permeated all the machinery of government. Its growing power, however, provoked a coup d'etat in the palace, and the king was dethroned and imprisoned. Mazdak and his followers were invited to the court by the new king on the pretext that a theological dispute was to be held, and they were massacred en masse. Surviving Mazdakis were persecuted, and their books burned. Mazdakism and its reforms which aimed at establishing a more egalitarian and more humanitarian society was often interpreted by scholars, including Kirmani, as essentially a social movement similar to the modern social communism.

Iran a republican, egalitarian type of government. In Ā'īn-i Iskandarī, the author surmises that throughout the long history of Iran, before and after the advent of Islam, no leaders, no movement ever arose to fight for the people's rights. The revolts that occurred were simply "protests against individuals and not against a prevailing situation". Similarly, the revolutions that took place were aiming at "changing the individual governor, or ruler, and not at changing the governmental system".[69] Mazdak was the only exception, for he believed that each subject had the right to interfere in state affairs and that the government should be entrusted to "an assembly of national representatives and notables" (shurā-yi muntakhibīn va buzurgān-i qaum). This "worthy man" also promoted the idea that "a nation's progress depended upon freedom of thought and action".[70] Kirmānī claims that had Mazdak succeeded in his time, Iran would have now reached the highest stage of progress and civilization. Unfortunately, the Sasanid Shah crushed the revolt, and thus

> The gate which nature had opened for the people of Iran, and which would have led to endless progress, was forever obstructed.[71]

Hence the Sasanid defeat at the hands of the Arabs was actually history's revenge.

Here, then, we observe that what Kirmānī was in fact praising Mazdak for were eighteenth and nineteenth century Western liberal

concepts such as human rights, freedom of thought and action, sovereignty of the people, republicanism, national representatives, ... They were concepts of government which he wished to see established in Iran.

Furthermore, by comparing Persian Mazdakism to the European movements called nihilism, socialism and anarchism,[72] he adds a more radical tone to his political thought. Although in all his works, with the exception of Hasht Bihisht, he makes flattering references to the revolutionary movements, nowhere does he attempt to define them or explain their respective goals. By referring to them synonymously, he reveals himself to be in fact rather confused and unaware of the real nature, as well as of the significance, of each movement. The only conclusion we can draw from this is that he was merely attracted by their revolutionary aspect which aimed at bringing drastic political and social changes.

For it was drastic social and political changes that Kirmānī incessantly called for in his works. In Sa Maktūb, for instance, he attempts to introduce nineteen French terms, the meaning of which might have seemed revolutionary, to his contemporary Persian readers. A brief review of the choice and definition of these words should clearly illustrate our point:

1. despote: defined as a Padishah, and not just any kind of ruler, who has absolute power over his subjects whom he treats as slaves, deprived of all human rights.

2. civilisation: "consists of saving a nation from envy, avarice, and state of savagery,...barbary and ignorance"; of acquiring full knowledge necessary for progress in life, science and technology; and of improving and spreading humanitarian mores and customs among the people".

   The author is then interpreting civilization as a modern, human as well as moral absolute concept that a nation could acquire, and not as the total culture, or the way of life of a people or nation at any period.

3. littérature: any kind of composition written in verse or prose.

4. fanatique: a person who is religiously so bigoted that he allows the persecution of those who oppose his belief. The term is therefore restricted to the religious connotation.

5. philosophe: a rational person who "attributes the causes of physical laws to nature; who is aware of the deep nature of things; who holds no superstitious beliefs in miracles and in the supernatural power of Jinns, Dīv, Parī, and Shaytān; who considers as ignorant those who believe in them; who dismisses the latter as outsiders of the human circle, being inferior even to animals ....There is no being more complete and wiser than the

philosophe". Rationalism is thus seen as the highest and noblest of human virtues.

6. révolution: occurs when (a) people, harassed by the despotic rule of the Padishah, dethrone the latter and establish laws suitable to their own happiness, or (b) when people get to understand their religious beliefs rationally, become impatient with the ignorance of the mullahs or popes, throw off the tiresome religious burden, and establish a new law, or a new religion, in accordance to philosophical principles and national nature.

7. progrès: a nation's zealous effort to achieve advancement in the sciences and industries, to establish culture, and to eliminate injustice.

8. poésie: a composition describing a person, a tribe, or a nation; or stating a problem, or picturing the world of the nature in verse and expressing a certain emotion or impression.

9. patriote: is a person who, out of love for his country and for the sake of his nation's progress, would not hesitate to sacrifice himself, his wealth, his possessions. He is an honorable person, leader of a society, having given dignity to his nation. The Prophet, for instance, was an Arab who helped the Quraysh tribe and the Arab nation acquire dignity and honor.

10. changement: is the happening of a great event in the world, such as Noah's flood; or among a group of people such as the decline

of the Roman Empire, the catastrophe of the Mongol invasion,... The author is defining changes as great historical events.

11. politique: refers to a state's goals and issues which are profitable to the government as well as the country.

12. protestantisme: it is the religion in which the individual's duty to worship and obey God's command is substituted by his duty to observe people's rights. "It is well known in Europe and one can say that its creator and promoter has done a great service to the nation."

13. libére: is a free man, free in his thinking, and free from religious promises and threats such as hell, heaven, hope, despair,... He considers as a lie any matter that contradicts the law and cause of nature, even if it is held as true by a whole community, or if recorded in history. He does not believe in tales and sayings that are irrational, not even those attributed to the Prophet himself. He spends all his time in educating and organizing the government, or in establishing progress and culture. He is wise, philosophical, honest and straightforward.

14. electrique: widespread power that is of great profitable use in Europe.

15. penseur: is a learned philosopher-writer who openly without concealment (taqīya) does not hesitate to sacrifice himself for the good of his country. He freely criticizes everything in the

newspapers and fearlessly exposes his philosophical ideas. Such a man is greatly honored in Europe.

16. charlatan: a liar, a crook, a selfish, evil man.

17. parlement: consists of two assemblies: one composed of deputies elected by the people, and the other composed of notables of the country. The former discusses new laws, the latter approves them. The Padishah himself has only the right to execute them. He has no power to oppose or interfere with the legislation. He sees himself as an elder servant of the government, and as the affectionate father of the people. He gets his salary from the state treasury, is not allowed a penny more than his due. At the end of the paragraph Kirmānī adds:

> I do not believe that the people of the East could conceive or understand such a type of government, since they worship the Padishah as the shadow of God, Son of Heaven.

18. Pétrarque and Voltaire: two famous philosophers of Europe who have left great literary works. "Especially Voltaire who fought for the elimination of papal and priestly ideas".

19. chimie: "a useful science which the ignorant Persians mistake for alchemy".[73]

Here, then, Kirmānī praises political constitutionalism and religious reform. In Risāla-yi Mashā' Allah he explicitly calls for a movement within Islam similar to the Protestant revolt within

Christianity.

> People should be enlightened and helped to throw the heavy (religious) burden off their shoulders. It is only then that the Muslim religion will emerge in its truth and purity, free from the absurdities that the ulama charged her with....European nations progressed only when they were freed from the influence of pope and priests.[74]

Such a "liberation", the author argues, would succeed in turning people's full attention to "national problems" and convert their religious fanaticism into patriotic zeal. It would also result in reforming the educational system and promoting the study of meaningful sciences and philosophy. True knowledge would then be widespread, which would lead to national strength. For knowledge, which is the basis of culture and progress, constitutes a resisting barrier difficult for the enemies to cross.[75]

Mīrzā Āqā Khān similarly explains that since a "nation's existence depends on the existence of its language", the Persian language should also be reformed, purified from its unnecessary Arabic terminology and rendered easy to read and to write to combat illiteracy.

> Whereas knowledge is the soul of a human being, language constitutes the body of knowledge.[76]

Language is a nation's unifying factor, its living symbol. We would like to remark here that although Kirmānī constantly attacked the Arabic alphabet for being unsuitable to the Persian language, we have not been able to find in any of his works an open call for the adoption

of the Latin alphabet.

It is significant that although the author looks back to Iran's pre-Islamic past with great nostalgia and wishes to see it resurrected, it is to modern Europe that he turns in search for a solution. He never fails to refer to it as the model to be followed, as the guide to prosperity, progress and happiness, as the authority to consult, and as the ultimate proof for all his arguments. He prophetically warns his compatriots:

> O ignorant fathers of today! You who are not willing to let your children learn the languages of the Europeans and study their sciences because it is kafr, soon this ignorance of yours will force them to become the servants and grooms of the Europeans and you will see this abjectness with your own eyes.[77]

Kirmānī insists that such a misfortune should at all costs be prevented from happening. It is up to some individuals to take up this ambitious task of reviving a nation, individuals whose great and noble names would be recorded in history with glory. They

> with their patriot(ic) force...would bring about a sudden changement in Iran which would cause a revolution. With their electric (al) and literary power, and with the strength of their...pen, would liberate the people who are buried alive in their grave of sufferings...and free them from the grip of the fanatic(al) ulama and from the rule of the despot.[78]

In his clear and loud call for revolution, Kirmānī uses the French terms which he had attempted to introduce to his readers. He obviously

considered himself to be his people's educator as well as one of their revolutionary leaders who would direct them straight to the promised era of justice, progress, and happiness.

Conclusion

Mīrzā Āqā Khān's criticism of nineteenth century Persian society quite adequately depicts the prevailing ills of the time. It also reveals the author's personal feeling of restless discontent and his deep-rooted, passionate strife for a positive fulfillment of happiness. His discontent is with the reality which he finds bitter and unbearable, because it does not conform with his own conception of an ideal society. Iranian reality alienates him and generates in him a mixed feeling of frustration, anger and, hatred. He consequently looks for a means to escape and for a substitute gratification which he finds in a mythical past and in a visionary future, both creations of his own mind. He also feels the need for a convenient scapegoat to curse and to condemn for the misery he is suffering, which thus enables him to pour out all the hatred and anger that oppress him. History provides him with the substitute gratification. Unlike James Joyce who had written, "history is a nightmare from which I am trying to awaken," Kirmānī found history necessary, even vital, for the shaping of a national self-image. Hence he endeavors to give Iran a Zoroastrian, pre-Islamic identity which appears to him more advantageous and more flattering. In the Arabs

and Islam he finds the object he seeks to scorn and blame for the Persian decadence. In the Western racist theories of the time, he finds the rationale for the personal contempt he assails the Arabs with, and a positive argument for the glorification of the Persian nation. Finally it is in revolution that he finds a solution for the future.

Paradoxically enough, though it is characteristic of most national movements, the form his opposition takes is, broadly speaking, not a demand for a return to the old system, but a demand for Westernization. We notice a second paradox, which again is common to the European and non-European liberals of that time, in the inconsistency of the ideas he promotes. On the one hand, he calls for human rights, freedom, equality, justice, sovereignty of the people,...and on the other, he expresses unjust and biased racist statements. Whereas he again and again claims to be rational, he very often passes irrational judgements and displays irrational emotions. He attacks the ulama for their fanaticism and intransigence, yet he reveals himself to be fanatical and intransigent in his views. Though he tries to abolish religion because of its disastrous effects upon society, he actually wishes to establish a new religion, nationalism, that shares many of the former's shortcomings and defects.

Having thus pointed out the negative aspects of Kirmānī's national and revolutionary thought, we should like to refer now to the more positive, constructive points. The most obvious one is, of course, his great contribution to the awakening of Persian social consciousness. He was one of the first Persians to have not only realized the intellectual and social backwardness of the country, but also attempted to find the root of the problem and suggested a possible solution. Unlike his contemporary statesmen and fellow revolutionaries, he had the great courage openly to denounce the Muslim institutions, the political regime, and the educational system as the real causes for the national stagnation. The solution he offers is therefore aiming at more than mere "window dressing". For he demands a radical, profound change within the entire social structure and system of values and beliefs. The revolution he calls for he correctly sees as a moral necessity, as springing out of the dire local needs of the society and not as a mere tradition that he borrowed from the West.

In spite of his own personal failure to abide by them consistently, his call for modern, rational, scientific concepts and principles was a healthy sound to hear. He genuinely wished to see Iran modernize and its people enjoy better living conditions and a better intellectual, more creative atmosphere.

Footnotes

1. F. Fanon, Peau Noire, Masques Blancs, Paris, 1952, p. 128.
2. Sad Khitāba, no. 5.
3. Ibid.
4. A'īn-i I Skandarī, pp. 103-104.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 158.
7. Sa Maktūb, p. 69.
8. Ibid., p. 151.
9. Sad Khitāba, no. 14.
10. A'īn-i I Skandarī, p. 145.
11. Sa Maktūb, p. 45.
12. Sad Khitāba, no. 27.
13. Sa Maktūb, p. 10.
14. Translated by E. G. Browne, Modern Press and Poetry in Persia, Cambridge, 1924, p. XXXIV.
15. Ibid., p. XXXV.
16. Sa Maktūb, p. 16.
17. Ibid., p. 112.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 77.
20. Ibid., p. 79.
21. Ibid., p. 80.

22. Sad Khitaba, no. 24.

23. Ibid., no. 31.

24. Ibid., no. 32.

25. Ibid., no. 34.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., no. 26.

28. Ibid., no. 25.

29. Ibid., no. 3-4.

30. Ibid., no. 20.

31. Ā'īn-i I Skandarī, p, 169; and Sad Khitāba, nos. 6, 18, 20.

32. Sad Khitāba, no. 15.

33. Sa Maktūb, pp. 24-26.

34. Ibid., p. 35.

35. Sad Khitāba, no. 28.

36. Ibid., no. 27.

37. Sa Maktūb, p. 21.

38. Sad Khitāba, no. 32.

39. Ibid., no. 24.

40. Sa Maktūb, p. 164.

41. Ibid., p. 88.

42. Ibid., pp. 39-40.

43. Ibid., p. 97.

44. Ibid., p. 98.

45. Ibid., p. 105.

46. Ibid., p. 106.

47. Ibid., p. 40.

48. Ibid., p. 74.

49. Ibid., p. 30.

50. Ibid., p. 29.

51. Ibid., p. 53.

52. Sad Khitāba, no. 24.

53. Ibid., no. 37.

54. Risāla-yi Inshā 'Allah Mashā 'Allah, p. 7.

55. Ibid., p. 21.

56. Sa Maktūb, p. 43.

57. Sad Khitāba, no. 41.

58. Sa Maktūb, p. 88.

59. Salārnāma, p. 12.

60. Sad Khitāba, no. 17.

61. Sa Maktūb, pp. 6-9.

62. Sad Khitāba, no. 1.

63. Ibid., no. 6.

64. Sa Maktūb, p. 88.

65. Ibid., p. 15.

66. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

67. Ibid., p. 14.

68. Ibid., p. 17.

69. Aʾīn-i I Skandarī, p. 160.

70. Ibid., p. 165.

71. Ibid., p. 169.

72. Salārnāma, p. 120; Sad Khitāba, no. 6; Sa Maktūb, p. 88.

73. Sa Maktūb, pp. 1-6.

74. Risāla-yi Mashāʾ Allah, pp. 21-22.

75. Sad Khitāba, no. 16.

76. Sa Maktūb, p. 161.

77. Sad Khitāba, no. 39.

78. Sa Maktūb, p. 169.

CONCLUSION

It would be impossible to fit Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī into any neat academic category. He was a religious philosopher and historian, a socio-anthropologist, a poet and journalist, all rolled into one. He claimed to be a Muslim, a Babi, a philosopher, all at one and the same time.* His mind was profoundly confused, and his writings are a trial to any one who attempts to discover in them a logical sequence of ideas. The voluminous, disorderly corpus of his works could be easily written off as pretentious failures. But to do so is to miss the point entirely. For he was a man with wide interests, wider than most men of his age in his country. And he had a good pen to use. The point is (1) to try to understand the rationale of his shifting positions, and the extent to which we can detect in them an underlying unity of view; (2) to ask what there was in his emotional constitution and his relationship to society that made a man of such gifts such an intellectually mixed up person.

* A chronological evolution of his ideas from Islam to Babism, to atheist scientism would have been convenient to us and would have served the purpose of offering a more attractive, more coherent picture of Kirmānī. Unfortunately, such a sequence does not correspond with the true dates we managed to collect. For he wrote his most important works all in the years between 1891-96. Hasht Bihisht was completed in 1892, though most probably begun earlier. (Browne claims he received a complete manuscript in the same year.) Inshā'allah mashā' allah was written in 1893. In the same year Kirmānī was actively promoting Afghānī's pan-Islamism. Surāt was written about the same time, for it was used as an introduction to Hikmat-i nazarī, the first volume of the Babi work. Salārnāma was written in 1895-96.

Kirmānī had an intense craving for knowledge and he set out to pursue his self-education by reading voraciously. The result was a hopeless synthesis of the most disparate philosophical and social ideas which dominated his works.

He was essentially a humanist, having great faith in man and great confidence in the voice of reason. He put man in the center of the universe and made man's happiness the ultimate goal of the world. There was also in him a deep current of romanticism. On the other hand, he held great faith in the virtues of science. His works reveal a man who was ceaselessly thinking in terms of a consciousness of time and its fluctuations that was thoroughly modern and contemporary with Europe. Nevertheless, his eagerness to be rational and "scientific", his readiness to accept the new sciences because they seemed to be the way out of ignorance and social backwardness, the only key to the path of progress, rushed his conversion to scientism which was untimely. For he could not grasp the full implications of the scientific theories he came across in his readings. His method and his way of thinking were still traditional; his perception of man and of the world not yet "scientific", not yet modern. In short, he never had a truly scientific mind: hence all the paradoxes and inconsistencies which characterized the ideas he promoted, and which he never seems to have worried about. He wrote abundantly, but without a

system. His social doctrine--if he had any--was more a state of mind, a mystique, than a tangible program. The mental formation which had given him so penetrating an insight into the social and intellectual problems of his era at the same time held him back from developing this insight into a coherent theory of social action. He was a highly passionate and committed man more than an abstract thinker.

Kirmānī attempted to be rational in the tradition of the European enlightenment and held an instrumental attitude towards religion. In fact, we notice in his works a lack of sympathetic understanding of religious sentiment. And yet, he used a vocabulary which is full of religious imagery. Very often we have the impression of hearing a "prophet" rather than a scientist, a prophet preaching his new religion.

We have glimpses of Kirmānī the scientist, of Kirmānī the prophet, and also of Kirmānī the rebel: a man full of anger and hatred, prejudice and unfair judgements. For he was mainly a man of wrath, vicious in polemics and showering scorn on his adversaries. He excelled in writing fiery polemics. My bare sketch of his works can convey little of the rhetorical force of Kirmānī's tracts; my amateur translations reflect little of the conversational tone, the obsessive repetitions, the outbursts of anger, of his style. His prose swept on in mighty gusts, full of bravura passages expressing his polemical

fury. It seems to me that he behaved as a man driven by an inner compulsion towards words, writing from day to day according to the needs, and the mood, of the moment.

Kirmani was above all an idealist, a man constantly in search of a new cause to fight for. He saw rebellion as the basic value of human beings. And what he admired most about the nihilists and anarchists, and about Mazdak, was their personal rebellion against oppression. He had a personal vision of a new universe which he tried to ascribe to the various ideological movements he adopted, be they Babi or nationalist. This explanation could offer the key to the author's bewildering religious changes. He was constantly changing and constantly meeting disappointment. Yet, he kept on discovering a new idea, or a new movement in which to vest his hope. If he worked in alliance with the Babi movement, it was not through any theoretical adherence to the beliefs of the Bab--though he must have at some point been attracted by the latter's ideal. It was because the Babis seemed to offer the most potent contemporary Persian manifestation of the longing for change.

Mīrzā Āqā Khān had a great sense of drama, too. The memory of Babi martyrdom must have heightened his sense for tragedy, just as the revolutionary national cause met his longing for heroic

endeavor. He was a man with a great quest for heroism, yet he was living in an age of utter mediocrity, the age of Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah: no glorious wars; national humiliation at the hands of foreign enemies; cultural sterility and social stagnation. His own personal tragedy was that he was born too late to witness the Babi insurrection, and died too soon to take part in the heroic action of the Constitutional Revolution.

Kirmānī was conditioned and limited by the era in which he lived. He lived enmeshed in a society to whose central values he was radically opposed. He wrote in large part for an audience which could neither share nor even understand his ideas, and least of all embrace them. In the 1880s and 1890s he had shown, or at least attempted to show, his countrymen a way out of an intellectual, social, and moral impasse. At that point only a few had been prepared to follow him. A quarter of a century later, his words found an echo in Ahmad Kasravi.

Bibliography

The following is a list of manuscripts, books and articles which I have extensively used and quoted in my work. I have chosen to exclude the numerous secondary sources, on the history of Iran and of the Middle East in general, which were not directly related to my topic.

Ādamīyat, Firidūn. Amīr Kabīr va Irān. Tehran, 1970.

____. Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī. Tehran, 1967.

____. Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Fath ʿAlī Akhūndzāda. Tehran, 1970.

____. Fikr-i Azādī. Tehran, 1340/1961.

____. "Sa Maktūb-i Mīrzā Fath ʿAlī va Sad Khitāba-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī", Yaghma, No. 7, 8, Vol. 19. Tehran, 1345/1966.

Afshār, Iraj, ed. Nathr-i Fārsī-yi Muʿasir. Tehran, 1330/1951.

Akhūndzādā, Fath ʿAlī Mīrzā. Sa Maktūb. Milli Library, Tehran, Ms no.

Algar, Hamīd. Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Role of The Ulama in Qajar Period. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969.

____. "Malkam Khān, Ākhūndzāda and the Proposed Reform of the Arabic Alphabet", Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 5, No. 2, May 1969.

Asadābādī, Lut-fullah Khān. Sharh-i Hāl va Āthār-i Sayyid Jamāl ud Dīn Asadābādī Maʿrūf bi Afghānī. Tehran, 1948.

Avery, Peter. Modern Iran. New York, 1965.

Banani, Armin. The Modernization of Iran: 1921-41. Stanford, 1961.

Bāstānī-Pārīzī, Ibrāhīm. Khātūn Haft Qal'a. Tehran, 1965.

_____. Talāsh-i Āzādī: Muhīt-i Siyāsī va Zindigānī-yi Mushīr ud-Daula Pīrniyā. Tehran, 1348/1970.

Binder, Leonard. Iran: Political Development in a Changing Society. Berkeley, 1962.

Bishop, I. L. Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan. London, 1891.

Blunt, William S. The Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt. London, 1907.

Bricteux, A. Les Comedies de Malkam Khan. Liege, 1933.

Browne, E. G. A Literary History of Persia. Vol. 4, Cambridge, 1902.

_____. Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion. Cambridge, 1918.

_____. Persian Revolution 1905-1909. Cambridge, 1910.

_____. Press and Poetry in Modern Persia. Cambridge, 1914.

_____. A Traveller's Narrative Written to Illustrate the Episode of the Bab. Cambridge, 1891.

_____. A Year Amongst the Persians. Cambridge, 1927.

Cottan, Richard. Nationalism in Iran. Pittsburgh, 1964.

Curzon, George N. Persia and the Persian Question. London, 1892.

Dabistānī Kirmānī, Mahmūd. "Sharh-i Hāl-i Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī," Yaghmā, Sharivar 1328/1949.

Daulat Ābādī, Yahyā. Hayāt-i Yahyā. Tehran, 1957.

de Lorey, Eustache, and Slade, Douglas. The Moon of the Fourteenth Night. London, 1910.

Eiseley, Loren. Darwin's Century. New York, 1961.

English, Paul W. City and Village in Iran: Settlement and Economy in the Kirman Basin. Milwaukee, 1966.

Farmān-Farmayān, Hāfez. "The Forces of Modernization in Nineteenth Century Iran", in W. R. Polk and R. L. Chambers (ed.) Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East. Chicago, 1968.

Fanon, Franz. Peau Noire, Masques Blancs. Paris, 1952.

Gibb, Sir Hamilton A. R. Modern Trends in Islam. Chicago, 1947.

Gobineau, Comte Arthur de. Religions et Philosophies de l'Asie Centrale. Paris, 1899.

_____. Trois Ans en Asie. Paris, 1859.

von Grunebaum, Gustave E. Medieval Islam. Chicago, 1962.

Hidāyat, Mihdī Qūlī. Khāṭirāt va Khaṭarāt. Tehran, n.d.

Hourani, Albert. Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age. Oxford, 1962.

Hughes, H. Stuart. Consciousness and Society. New York, 1958.

Ibrāhīm, Muhammad b. Saljūqiyān va Ghuz dar Kirmān. ed. Bāstānī-Pārīzī. Tehran, 1964.

I'timād us-Saltana, Muhammad Hasan Khān. Rūznāma-yi Khāṭirāt, ed. I. Afshār. Tehran, 1967.

Kamshad, Hasan. Modern Persian Prose Literature. Cambridge, 1966.

Kasravī, Ahmad. Tārīkh-i Hījda Sāla-yi Azerbaijan yā Dāstān-i Mashrūta-yi Irān. Tehran, 1939-41.

Kazemzada, Firuz. Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1940. New Haven, 1968.

Keddie, Nikki R. Islamic Response to Imperialism. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969.

_____. Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892. London, 1966.

_____. "The Origins of the Religious-Radical Alliance in Iran", Past and Present, No. 34, July 1966.

Keddie, Nikki R. "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism", Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. IV, No. 3, April, 1962.

____. "The Roots of the Ulama's Power in Modern Iran", Studia Islamica, Vol. 23, 1969.

Kedourie, Elie. Afghani and Abduh. London, 1966.

Kirmānī, Mīrzā Āqā Khān. Ā'īna-yi Iskandarī. Tehran, 1947.

____. Hikmat-i Nazarī. MS belonging to Mr. ʿAlī Muhammad Qāsimī, Director of the Bank Kar, Tehran.

____. Hasht Bihisht. Tehran, 1958.

____. Kitāb-i Rihān. University of Tehran Central Library, microfilmed copy (no. 3465). The original MS belongs to Mujtabā Mīnovī, Professor at the School of Theology, University of Tehran.

____. Kitāb-i Rizvān. University of Tehran Central Library, microfilmed copy (no. 3165). The original MS belongs to Mujtabā Mīnovī.

____. Qahva Khāna-yi Sūrat yā Haftad ud-dau Millat. Berlin, 1964.

____. Risāla-yi Inshā'Allah Mashā'Allah. Cambridge University Library, E. G. Browne Collection of Persian MS.

____. Sad Khitāba. Milli Library, Tehran. MS no. 2306.

____. Sa Maktūb. Handwritten copy of the MS belonging to Mrs. Nikki R. Keddie, Professor, History Department, University of California, Los Angeles.

____. Takvīn va Tashrīʿ. Typewritten copy of the MS, both belonging to Mr. ʿAlī Muhammad Qāsimī, Director of the Bank Kar, Tehran.

____. "Dar Fan Guftan va Nivishtan", a series of articles published in Akhtar, XV ( ) no. 37 to XVI ( ) no. 11.

____. Letters to Malkam Khān. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Manuscripts Orientaux, Archive du Prince Malkom Khan, Suppléments Persans, 1996, folios no. 60 to no. 167.

Kirmānī, Nāzim ul Islām. Tārīkh-i Bīdārī-yi Īrānīyān, ed. A. Sirjani. Tehran, 1967.

Kirmānī, Shaykh Yahyā Ahmad. Farmandahān-i Kirmān, ed. Bāstānī-Pārīzī. Tehran, n.d.

Lambton, Ann K. S. Islamic Society in Persia. London, 1954.

____. "Persia: The Breakdown of a Society", Cambridge History of Islam, Vol. 1, 1970.

____. "Persian Political Societies 1906-11", St. Antony's Papers, 16, 1963.

____. "Persian Society Under the Qajars", Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, 48, 1961.

____. "Secret Societies and the Persian Revolution", St. Antony's Papers, 4, 1958.

____. "The Tobacco Regie: Prelude to Revolution", Studia Islamica, Vol. 22, 1965.

Lisān ul Mulk, Muhammad Taqī. Nāsikh ul Tavārīkh, ed. J. Qā'im Maqāmī. Tehran, 1958.

Majd ul Mulk, Muhammad Khān Sinakī. Risāla-yi Majdīya, ed. S. Nafīsī. Tehran, 1942.

Malcolm, Sir John. The History of Persia from the Most Early Period to the Present Time. London, 1815.

Malikzāda, Mihdi. Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Mashrūtiyat-i Irān. Tehran, 1949-51.

Malkam Khān, Mīrzā. "Persian Civilization", Contemporary Review, LIX 1821, 238-244.

____. Qānūn. London, 1890-96.

____. "Usūl-i Taraqī", Sukhan, No. 1-6, Vol. 16. Tehran, 1345/1966.

Mīnovī, Mujtabā, "Avvalīn Kārāvan-i Ma'rifat", Yaghmā, Vol. 6, No. 5-9, 1959.

Morier, James. The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Isfahan. London, 1824-28.

Nafīsī, Saʿīd. Tārīkh-i Ijtimāʿī va Siyāsī-yi Irān dar Daura-yi Muʿasir. Tehran, 1344/1965.

Nāsir ud-Dīn Shah. Safarnāma-yi Farangistān. Tehran, n.d.

Nicholas, A., trans. Le Beyan Persan. Paris, 1911.

Pakdaman, Homa. Djamal-ed-Din Assad Abadi dit Afghani. Paris, 1969.

Pizishkzāda, Hasan. Ruhiyāt-i Sharq va Qarb. Tehran, n.d.

Rabīʿzāda, Hāshim. Kulliyāt-i Malkam Khān. Tehran, 1325/1946.

Rahman, Fazlur. Islam. Chicago, 1966.

Rypka, Jan. History of Iranian Literature. Dordrecht, 1968.

Sadrā, Mullah. Le Livre des Pénétrations Métaphysiques, ed. H. Corbin. Paris, 1964.

Safāʾī, Ibrāhīm, ed. Asnād-i Siyāsī Daurān-i Qājār. Tehran, 1346/1967.

_____. Rahbarān-i Mashrūta. Tehran, 1344/1965.

Sarābī, Husayn b. Abdullah. Makhzan-ul Vaqāyiʿ, ed. K. Esfahanian and G. Rowshani. Tehran, 1965.

Sāsānī, Khān Malik. Siyāsatqarān-i Daura-yi Qājār. Tehran, 1959.

Sykes, Sir Percy M. A History of Persia. London, 1951.

_____. Ten Thousand Miles in Persia or Eight Years in Iran. New York, 1902.

Tabātabāʾī, Muhīt. Majmūʿa-yi Āthār-i Mīrzā Malkām Khān. Tehran, 1327/1948.

_____. "Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī va Shaykh Ahmad Rūhī", Muhīt, No. 3, 21 Shahrivan 1326/1947.

Vasīqī, Sadr. Sayyid Jamāl ud-Dīn Husaynī: Pāyaguzār-i Nuhzathā-yi Islāmī. Tehran, 1348/1967.

Vazīrī, Ahmad ʿAlī Khān. Jughrafyā-yi Kirmān. ed. Bāstānī-Parīzī. Tehran, 1346/1967.

____. Tārīkh-i Kirmān yā Salārīyya. Tehran, n.d.

Watson, R. G. A History of Persia from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 1858. London, 1866.

Zarrīnkūb, Abdul Husayn. Naqd-i Adabī. Tehran, 1959-60.